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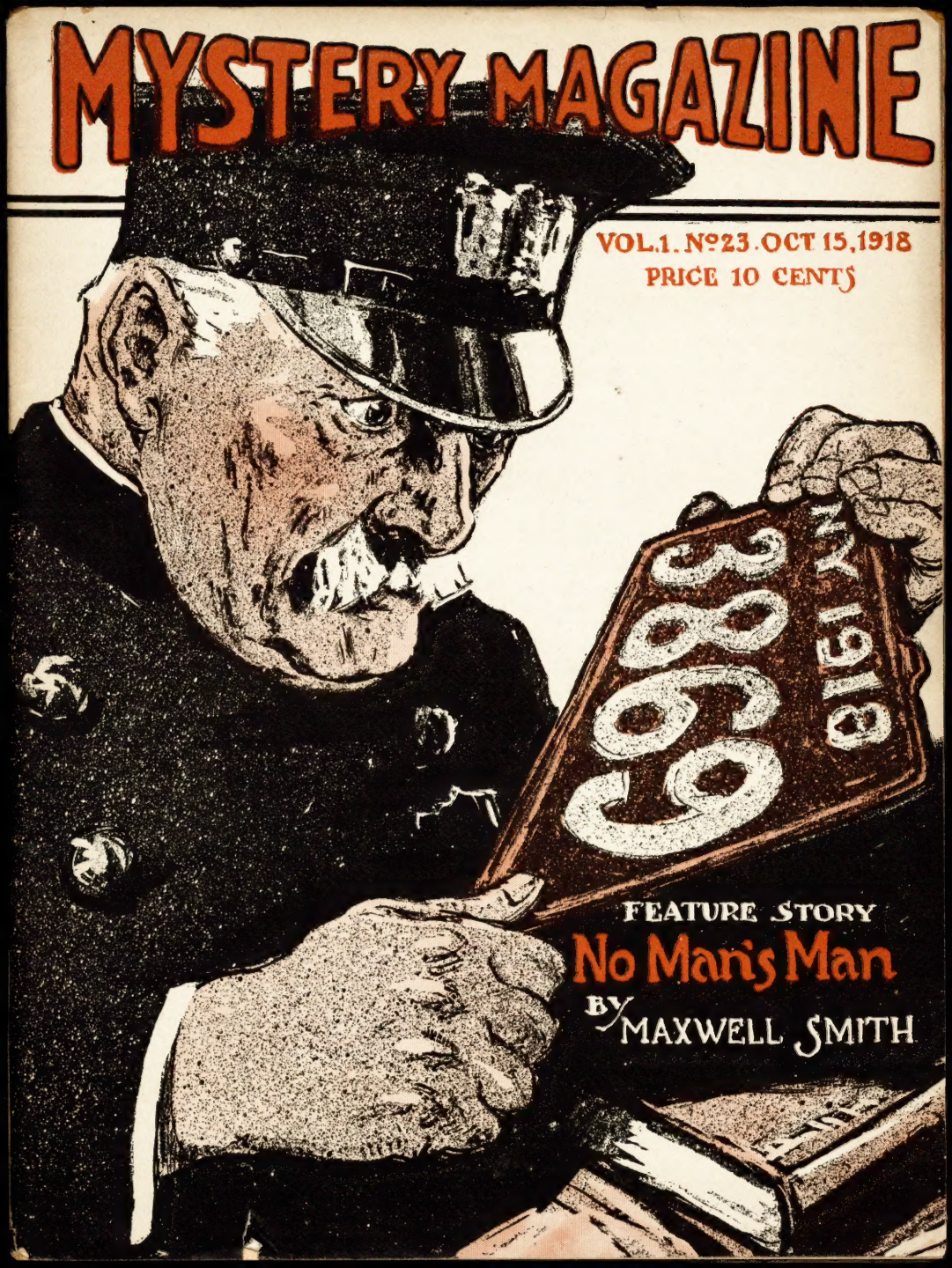


FEATURE STORY

## No Man's Man

BY MAXWELL SMITH

Read the Mysterious Detective Story, "THE TREVOR PUZZLE," in Our Next Number

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. I. OCTOBER 15, 1918. No. 23

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# NO MAN'S MAN

## A POLICE DEPARTMENT ROMANCE

By R. MAXWELL M. SMITH

Author of "Both Ends," "Four Kings," "Covered Up," etc.

### CHAPTER ONE

SKILLINGS didn't sit down. His bulk towered over the Mayor as he rested his hands on the broad table at which his honor sat.

"He kicks over," declared the boss pithily. "We've got to slam him."

Mayor Bradley, of Barnville, picked at his nails. His undersized body was restless. From behind the big horned glass he looked at Skillings thoughtfully. The left corner of his mouth twitched as it had a habit of doing when he was under stress.

"There will be an awful roar if I remove him now," he remarked. "My God, what a roar! Eight days before election."

The big blue eyes of Skillings stared out of his pudgy face. His hands, which still bore the knots they had gathered when he had dug in the earth with a pick—though that was many years ago—poked from pocket to pocket as he walked up and down. He stopped again in front of the Mayor.

"We got to get rid of Mister Police Commissioner Fouts," he repeated. His eyes hardened, lost their baby-blue. "He told me he'd been considering O'Grady for the promotion, but since we butted in there's nothin' doin'." He laughed throatily, viciously. "Say, Bradley, you should have heard the way he said that—Rat-a-tat—like that, so I'd be under no mistake about his meaning."

The Mayor squirmed. He was afraid of the outcome—afraid of what Calvin Fouts, his police commissioner, might bring upon himself if he had earned Skillings' wrath.

The Boss took up the phone. Bradley jumped up and laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"I'll remove him—remove him at once," he jerked. "The women are going to vote against us, so it doesn't matter. I've just heard that. We've got to let Fouts go."

Skillings put down the phone. He shoved Bradley back into his chair.

"I heard about the women, too," he stated, "but, damn it, Bradley, you don't have to get hysterics. You will *not* fire Fouts."

"But——"

The glassy stare made the Mayor halt. No one could have accused him of being a big man, physically or mentally. The best that could be said for him was that he had managed to keep the most obnoxious defects of his administration from being too publicly heralded. Notwithstanding his success in that particular, however, he could not contemplate the election on the following Tuesday without grevious qualm. He was fearful of the woman vote, polled for the first time.

Skillings spoke what was in Bradley's thoughts.

"Throw Fouts out," he rasped, "and you won't get any votes at all except from the mob that we can crowd in. You let our police commisioner alone. I'll fix him. Keep still while I phone."

The instructions that went over the telephone made Bradley protest again. He heard Skillings call upon a henchman to produce for him three persons—Half-Arm Merkel, Tony Meyer, and Joe Kinsella. While he continued speaking, Skillings waved the mayor aside.

"I want 'em to-night," he concluded into the phone. "Merkel and Meyer sure. At Jake's place."

He grinned at Bradley and bit on a fresh cigar.

"Pull yourself together and forget it," he adjured. "Don't worry about Fouts. He's taken care of."

Eyes popping behind his horned glass, the Mayor shrank involuntarily. He was opposed to strong-arm work. He didn't want to be mixed in anything involving violence. His voice was husky:

"You—you wouldn't——"

"Never mind that," Skillings cut him off. "I'm tending to this. The less you know the better."

The pale-blue eyes were hard as granite as he turned at the door. He puffed his lips and pointed at the Mayor with his cigar.

"Quit worryin', Bradley," he nodded. "There ain't no need—no more. Mulcahy will run the department over election."

Mulcahy was the Deputy Commissioner. Mention of him gave Bradley a chance to press the question:

"Mulcahy can't take charge until Fouts is out."

Skillings smiled at him and the Mayor shuddered. He had seen that smile once before when Skillings was issuing orders at an election—orders which led to a number of persons going to hospitals instead of to the polls.

"For the love of heaven, keep your nerve!" commanded the Boss. "That's all you have to do. Fouts don't have to be fired. He don't have to resign. But bank all you've got that he'll get out all right."

Stonily the Mayor watched him go. Then he slouched deep in his chair, picturing the near future. The sweat oozed out on his forehead. He had been faithful to those who had elected him—the machine, not the people—who would elect him again, but he quailed from the present situation. He dreaded that anything should happen to Fouts. What if the scheme should miscarry and he, the Mayor, be implicated?

Mayor Bradley swore in a manner unbecoming an exalted executive. The flabby ease of Skillings annoyed him. So did Fouts' pig-headedness which, Bradley told himself angrily, was to blame for whatever might take place.

In his agitation Bradley almost committed his bravest act since his elevation to office. He started a letter to Fouts, announcing that at midnight he would cease to be police commissioner. Half-way through, his courage failed and he sent the stenographer away.

As she went out it seemed that a temptation had been taken out of his reach. Suppose he had finished that letter! It would have brought upon him, instead of upon Fouts, the vengeance that Skillings demanded. There were reasons, financial reasons, why the organization he represented should retain control of the city government. If he deliberately upset the program——

The Mayor's narrow features crinkled. Damn Fouts, anyway! It would be his own funeral if anything happened.

## CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWING the events of that day, Police Commissioner Fouts sat alone in his office while Skillings went about the arrangements for having him put out of the way. The morning had brought about the crisis which he had wished to avoid—the question of his right to rule absolutely his own department.

When, eight months before, he had accepted the commissionership, it had been on the distinct understanding that he would be the police head in reality. Shrewd observers had seen the motive for the selection of Fouts; had understood that it was not due to any belated idealism on the part of the administration. It was a matter of expediency. The man he succeeded had resigned under pressure. Political necessity had dictated that. He was of the old machine stock. By replacing him with Fouts it had been hoped that once more the record of the Barnville police department could be made to prolong an evil administration. Come election time, they had planned, they would point to the reform in the department, to what it had accomplished. So they had prevailed upon Fouts to become police commissioner, and up till to-day he had had a free hand.

It was plain to Fouts that the demand made by Skillings for the appointment of Tom O'Grady to the vacant inspectorship had been made to feel him out. Almost on the eve of election Skillings and his crowd had given way to alarm. The fact that, despite everything, the women had not been deceived and would vote against Bradley had precipitated action. That made it essential for the Skillings crew to have a thorough grip on the polls while the ballots were being cast. They were afraid of what Fouts might do on election day to defeat their underground plans. Therefore Skillings had called for the promotion of his brother-in-law as a means of learning whether Fouts would be passive, or actively engaged against the machine.

As he went over it all, the commissioner's straight-lined face under the reddish hair was downcast. He did not want to quit—not yet. He wanted to see one square election in this city that had been the plaything of the bosses for so long.

O'Grady now was an acting captain. An hour before Skillings had come, a reporter had forewarned Fouts of his visit. When the reporter had said that O'Grady was "a good cop and a capable citizen," Fouts had agreed. He liked O'Grady, liked his work. But, he had said earnestly, if any one interfered on O'Grady's behalf the last chance he had would go glimmering. He recalled the reporter's closing words:

"Commissioner, you declared yourself 'no man's man'

when you took that chair not long ago. Mebbe you are. But listen to me. You aren't a darned whit any more no man's man than Tom O'Grady. And, say, if you're going to be on the level all the way through, you couldn't have a better man at your side than O'Grady. There's rough stuff coming November 6. O'Grady may be a brother-in-law, but he does his job in the light it should be done. The only orders he takes are police orders. Fouts, you have to prove that you are no man's man on this job. O'Grady is no man's man."

No sooner had the reporter gone, to leave him thinking over that, than Skillings had phoned to make an appointment. And while he had waited for the Boss to arrive, Lila Joyce had come in—Lila Joyce, the suffrage leader.

When she had been announced, Fouts had wondered whether she was as handsome as her pictures made out. He didn't suppose so. Thirty-four years old and a bachelor, he imagined he disliked women—particularly the suffrage-leading variety. He never had seen Lila Joyce close at hand; only from a distance when she was heading a parade. She had impressed him then as too mannish with her long, swinging stride. He recalled that her square shoulders, her easy way of carrying herself before so many spectators, had seemed to lack femininity. He had prepared to receive a masculine girl, and had found himself overcome by her presence, gazing frankly in admiration.

Standing just inside the door when he first saw her, the faintest smile had rippled her cheeks. His consternation had brought amusement to her eyes. There wasn't a line about her, he had marvelled, that did not proclaim the feminine. Nothing from the medium-broad, semi-flapping velvet hat, all the way down past those bits of frizzy ribbon that peeped from the front of the three-quarter tailored coat, to the modish dark-gray shoes.

Pointedly she had stated her mission: "What would the police department do on election day?" Pointedly he had given the answer: "Its duty."

Her eyes had narrowed, and mentally he had noted that he liked her better smiling, although when her face was set with purpose its strength was emphasized.

"Just what does that mean?" she had asked. "Duty to the people or—to some one else?"

It was then that as he had leaned toward her he had decided her eyes were not blue; also that they were not gray; that the coralescent waters of Bermuda made the best likeness he could conjure.

"If you doubt," he had replied, "what was to be gained by coming here?"

She had colored. Her gaze had wavered, but steadied instantly.

"All we ourselves ask is a chance. We give every one else the same chance."

"And mine is——"

She had not hesitated—"To make good. We—we want our faith in you to be justified."

It was Fouts who had extended the interview. With the shadow of Skillings looming before him, he had taken enjoyment out of the presence of this fragrant girl. At the door, when she was going, she had given him her hand.

"We have great hope," she had said. "We have confidence——"

A tap and the door had opened while a clerk announced that Skillings was there. Fouts had felt Miss Joyce's eyes on him, questioning, as her lips formed Skillings' name. He had seen that the faith she had just expressed had been shaken. He condemned Skillings for his inopportune appearance.

"Like yourself, Miss Joyce," Fouts had said grimly, accepting her unspoken challenge, "he wants to talk with me about—the election."

Her chin had lost its softness to settle in firm mold. Her eyes had drawn together again and he had looked steadily into their clear but now icy depths.

"Good-by." He had acknowledged her bow. "You may count on me—if I still am commissioner."

Impulsively her hand had gone out, to halt before it reached his.

"We will—try," she had answered.

In the outer office as she had passed through he had seen Skillings lolling over the railing; had observed the broad grin with which he recognized the woman leader. He had resented Skillings' "How d' do?" and his nod, with the cigar rolling in his lips and his hat still on his head. That had caused Fouts to bite harder on his pipe while he had listened silently till Skillings finished his "request" for the appointment of O'Grady. Then Fouts had said all he had to say in two words.

After that the commissioner had called in Acting Captain O'Grady. Bluntly he had told O'Grady why he had lost all possibility of the promotion. The policeman had been disappointed, hurt, but had made no appeal. It was his bearing that had brought back to mind the reporter's words and suggested to Fouts that he put him to the test. He had assigned O'Grady to detached duty to discover what crooked plans were afoot for the election. O'Grady had balked.

"I know the men you suspect of planning this, commissioner," he had said. "I know them—intimately. I have their confidence."

Fouts had pretended to sneer. "So you're with the gang?"

O'Grady's jaw had protruded. His fists had clenched.

"You can't say that and get away with it, commissioner or no commissioner," he had flared. "I'll get what I can along legitimate lines, but I won't spy on my friends."

"Your duty to the people is to get evidence by any means that is not illegal," Fouts had retorted. "Abusing the confidence of a lawbreaker is not illegal."

The policeman's eyes had blazed. "My duty to myself is to get evidence by means that is not unmoral."

And Fouts had laughed softly. "You'll do, O'Grady, if you mean that. Go to it."

Thus as he sat reviewing the day, Fouts put aside thoughts of Lila Joyce and wondered whether O'Grady was sincere. Somehow he believed he was, and hated to think of O'Grady as Skillings' brother-in-law.

Skillings, he presumed, would take steps to oust him from the commissionership now it had come to a showdown. He did not, however, suspect that Skillings would go to such drastic lengths as the plot which at that very moment was well under way.

---

## CHAPTER THREE

IT was Thursday night, five days before election, that Fouts next saw Lila Joyce. In the lobby of a theater he and the suffrage leader met. She bowed distantly, the same lingering question in her eyes as when she had passed Skillings entering the commissioner's office.

Fouts would have liked to speak to the girl, to reassure her as far as he could that the women would not be handicapped on the following Tuesday. She gave him no chance, however; though she did look back to find his gaze greedily following her.

From his box, the commissioner spent most of his time

scanning the audience for a sign of her. Not until the scene of the second act did he see her.

Throughout the performance, too, her eyes had been more upon him than on the stage. With the recollection of the fact that Skillings had seemed so confident as he went to see Fouts that day strong in her mind, she had been unable to shake off the idea that the commissioner did not intend to carry out his promise. Against that impression, she laid the opinion she had formed of him; she found it difficult to believe him guilty of unfair dealings.

She told herself again and again that he was the sort to come into the open and tell her that he would not do as she desired, if that were his intention.

Although in the darkened theater he lost sight of her again as the third act started, she still could see him, outlined in the box. A few moments after the curtain went up, she noticed him turn to speak to some one, then rise and pass out of sight.

Fouts had followed the usher, who had whispered a word in his ear. In the lobby the manager met him.

"There is a phone call for you, commissioner," said the manager. He seemed irritated, and hastened to explain, and express regret. "It's from a store around the corner. The man who brought word said the caller had tried all our phones and they were out of commission. I tried them myself, and it's so—not one of them is working. The roof circuit of lights is out, too. So I suppose the wires have crossed somewhere. The messenger said it was O'Grady on the wire, and to tell you it was important."

"That's all right," said Fouts. "Where is the store?"

"Just back of here on Radford street," replied the manager. "I wouldn't have called you out at all, if they hadn't said the message was urgent."

"Send word to the man with me where I've gone," requested Fouts. "Tell him I'll be back in a few minutes."

He stepped out of the theater without bothering to get his overcoat. On the streets was the quiet that settles in the shank of the night, along after ten o'clock, when the early homegoers are on their way and the theaters have not begun to spill their thousands.

As he turned into Radford street a man loafed along a few steps in front of him. There was no one else in sight. The thought struck him, when he noticed the number over a shop on the other side of the street, that O'Grady might have found a phone nearer the theater. The store he had to go to must be more than a block away.

At the first corner, Cantwell avenue, he noticed the man ahead stopped, stretching himself. When Fouts was almost beside him he stepped into a doorway. An automobile that had been standing across the street started up. It swung into the avenue, running close to the curb and forcing the commissioner to halt. As it passed him the engine was accelerated. From inside the car, a distance of not more than six feet, came a shot.

Fouts felt a searing pain in his breast. The shock of the bullet's impact made him reel. The blood flamed to his head. His eyes blurred.

His last impression as he fell was of the man dodging from the doorway and the car speeding down Cantwell avenue.

When the commissioner came to, a few minutes later, a couple of passersby were picking him up. Deserted as the street had been, a crowd was already gathering. A policeman elbowed his way through. He peered down at the wounded man.

"Good Lord!" he cried. "The commissioner!"

A gust of coughing checked Fouts as he strove to speak. Blood-flecked foam came to his lips.

"Call an ambulance," the patrolman instructed one of the awed spectators. "And here, you, lend a hand to carry him."

Another policeman arrived with the folks who still were running to find the cause of the crowd. His mate told him who the victim was, and he ran to phone Headquarters.

Fouts swooned again as he was carried into a store to await the coming of the ambulance. One of the crowd pushed his way in.

"He was shot from a car," he declared excitedly. "I got the number here."

The policeman immediately took charge of him.

"What'd you see?" he demanded.

"I was coming along Radford street back of him," said the man. "He stopped on the corner to let the auto pass. As it went by he fell, and the machine sped away. I noticed the number as it came toward me—before it turned the corner and he was shot. It was 8869."

"No, that wasn't it," said another man who had drawn near. "It was 8839. I saw it."

"That's right—8839," chimed in a third. "It passed me just as this chap fell. I looked after it and got the number."

The patrolman turned to the second witness.

"Where were you?"

"Coming down Cantwell avenue."

"Then what you saw was the rear number plate?"

"Yes."

The policeman swore whole-heartedly.

"—— lot of good it did to take the number. They had the plates faked."

Fouts rolled over. His eyes blinked open. He coughed and gasped. The policeman wiped blood from his lips again as the ambulance clanged up.

Leaving the theater, Lila Joyce paused inside the entrance with her mother and the two friends who made up her party, to wait till their motor drew up. A few words, overheard from a group of men standing near by, made her pale. She had caught "Fouts" and "shot." She stepped nearer to the speakers.

"Looks like it was all framed up," she heard one say. "The manager told me he was got out of here on a fake phone call, and plugged at the next corner. The phone wires here were all cut, to give an excuse for calling him outside. Shot through the lung."

In a daze, Lila was standing, listening for more details, when her mother touched her on the arm.

"Come," she said, "the car is waiting. Good heavens, Lila, what is the matter? Are you ill?"

"They've shot him," whispered the girl; "shot him!"

"Shot whom?" her mother gasped. "Who has?"

Without answering, Lila walked out to the car. Her thoughts were in a turmoil. She did not doubt for a moment who it was that had shot Fouts; who, at least, had procured the act. Nor why he had been shot. But aside from the crime itself, she had another large regret; that she had questioned his sincerity simply because she had seen Skillings enter his office with such self-assurance.

In the light of that incident, leaping at a wrong conclusion, she had not expected much assistance from the police on election day. She knew something of the plans that were being made by the Skillings crowd. They would have clear sailing, now that Fouts was out of the road!

It was all clear to her at once. Hadn't he qualified his pledge to her only with the phrase: "If I am still commissioner?"

Even though he were not mortally hurt, he might as well not be commissioner, so far as she and her sister voters were concerned. If he were not actively on the scene, the Skillings gang would see to it that his orders were ignored.

As soon as she reached home the young woman leader telephoned police headquarters to learn which hospital Fouts had been taken to. Then she phoned the hospital, and was told that he was in a serious condition, but had a chance of recovery. The bullet had perforated the edge of the upper lobe of the left lung. It already had been extracted, and the commissioner was resting as easily as could be expected, under an opiate.

## CHAPTER FOUR

THE morning after the shooting Captain Thomas O'Grady was summoned before First Deputy Mulcahy, acting commissioner, and asked about his assignment.

Loyal to his chief, O'Grady lied and said he was on leave. Mulcahy looked up the record and could find no confirmation of that statement. O'Grady shrugged and said the commissioner must have forgotten.

"Your index says you're on special detail," charged Mulcahy, who was following orders in prying into what O'Grady had been doing.

"Then," responded O'Grady, "I don't know what it is."

Mulcahy was puzzled. He wanted to see Skillings before he went any further with O'Grady. The officer was told to report back that afternoon. As he left the building, another detective was at his heels "tailing" him.

O'Grady made straight for the hospital. Whatever resentment he had entertained toward Fouts disappeared when he saw the commissioner on a bed of pain. Like Lila Joyce, he suspected who had caused the shooting. The reason for it was also clear to him. That was why he had lied to Mulcahy.

The shooting had thrown him absolutely on the side of Fouts. In his anger over the murderous assault, he determined to back the commissioner to the end, to take personal interest in defeating the gang at election, and to run down Fouts' assailants.

He realized that he would have to buck the whole machine to do so. Brother-in-law or not, he understood that full pressure would be brought to bear on him, even to the use of a gun or blackjack—as the commissioner had been served. He was willing to run that risk. He had come to tell Fouts so.

At first the hospital authorities refused to let him see the patient. Fouts, after a fairly restful night, insisted upon his admission. Finally, they led him to the bedside, on condition that the commissioner would not talk. The hemorrhage had been stopped, and while the penetration of the lung was not severe, it was essential that he give it complete quiet.

First of all, O'Grady told of his session with Mulcahy. He wanted to know if he had done right. Fouts nodded.

"Wait," he breathed. "I've asked Miss Joyce to come here. I sent word to you, too. I want you and her to work together."

He would have said more, but the nurse made him stop.

While they waited on the suffrage leader, O'Grady told what he had discovered about the preparations for election day.

Fouts dared the nurse's wrath.

"Good work!" he gasped. But he could give no clue to his assailants.

"They've got two numbers from the auto to work on," O'Grady informed him. "Front and rear were different. Probably both phony plates. That isn't anything to go on."

The commissioner understood. A faint smile stole through his pain.

"They won't hunt very hard," he said weakly.

"But I will," said O'Grady sharply. "I'll get the guys who did this, if it takes a year."

"They'll stop you!"

"They can't! And I'll get some of the dogs higher up while I'm at it."

A happy light on the wounded man's face made the policeman turn to see what held his attention. Lila Joyce stood in the doorway, her face drawn with anxiety, the light of compassion in her eyes.

Unaffectedly she came forward and took the commissioner's hands as it lay listless on the coverlet. Her rich voice choked as she murmured her sympathy.

To O'Grady, the effect of her presence on Fouts was apparent. In the flush which mantled the girl's cheeks when her eyes drooped before the intensity of the sick man's gaze, he thought he saw additional evidence that warmed his heart.

"Captain O'Grady—Miss Joyce." Fouts spoke with great effort. "He is doing the work to keep things straight next Tuesday."

The girl bowed to O'Grady, but her face clouded.

"It looks bad for us," she said soberly.

"Why?"

As the commissioner stirred, the nurse raised a warning hand.

"Because," added Lila, "because they have put you out of the way."

She gently drew away her hand on which his had closed.

"I have a confession to make," she went on. And he was glad that she laughed a little. "I didn't believe that you really meant to help us when I met Skillings going in to see you—I'm sorry I thought that! I know, now, that you did mean to do the right thing."

She turned away. Fouts' eyes followed her.

"How do you know that?"

A new life seemed to have come to him. His voice was stronger. The lines of hurt were straightening out of his face. Eagerness was in his eyes as he waited for her answer.

She flashed a glance back to him, and he noticed that, once more, her eyes were flint.

"They shot you, didn't they?"

His heart thumped. Her fury was splendid. And it was over him!

"O'Grady's going after them, too," he whispered.

She at once took a new interest in O'Grady.

"If you need money or assistance," she offered, "call on me. I have the money. We can buy help."

Reverting to the election which she now looked upon as lost, but in which, nevertheless, she was determined to marshal her forces and go down fighting, she mentioned that the Skillings-Bradley lieutenants were busy proselytizing among women. Their energies in that direction had redoubled since they heard that the woman vote would be solid against them.

"But if we can get to the polls at all," she declared, "they will find what little progress they have made. Our organization was practically airtight. When I spread the truth about this shooting, it will be entirely so. Every woman who gets a chance will vote against Bradley. They must feel very sure not to have taken that into account."

For her benefit O'Grady told what he had found about the importation of gangsters, and the plans laid to intimidate the women.

The nurse interrupted by sticking a thermometer into Fouts' mouth. When she had taken it out, she waved the visitors arbitrarily to the door.

"You've got his temperature up!" she scolded.

O'Grady gripped the patient's hand.

"I'll stop in again," he promised. "Meantime, I'm going after them."

Lila also clasped his hand.

"I, too, will be back. Good luck!"

---

## CHAPTER FIVE

THE morning papers gave Mayor Bradley his first word of the assault on the police commissioner. It glared out at him from the paper that was handed him as he left home. On the way downtown he crouched in his car, staring at the headlines. His eyes would not focus down to smaller print.

Before he reached City Hall he stopped the machine and bought copies of all the papers. It did not matter that they would be on his desk. The splash of black type over the front pages stunned him.

When the car halted at City Hall and the chauffeur opened the door, the Mayor hung back. The man looked around and saw him.

"Are you ill, sir?" he asked respectfully.

Mayor Bradley pulled himself together.

"No, no," he answered.

He gathered his papers into an unkempt bundle under his arm and, almost at a run, entered the building.

In the halls several greeted him with the usual "Good-morning," but he gave no heed. His sole idea was to get to the privacy of his office where he could know more of this thing which threatened to engulf him.

His secretary met him at the door. He was not in the inner circle, but he suspected much about the shooting. He eyed the Mayor curiously.

"Terrible, isn't it, that they should have shot Fouts?" he said.

Throwing off his coat and hat, Bradley nodded.

"What motive do you suppose——" began the secretary, for the sake of making conversation.

"Get out and let me alone!" yelled Bradley. "Can't you see I'm all broken up? Get out, get out!"

He saw his mistake as the man started to go.

"Joe," he called, "don't pay any attention to that. I—I—— Send some flowers to the hospital, and—find out if I can visit Fouts. Do that, Joe—do that at once."

He felt the throbbing of the nerve in his lip. It was twitching uninterruptedly. It never had done that before. He put his hand to his face. The whole cheek seemed to be affected.

Under his breath he raved while he spread out several of the newspapers. His heart skipped every second beat, it seemed. He wished Skillings would come and tell him what to do. Skillings! If he hadn't——

Finally the Mayor got a hold on himself. What had he to do with this? he asked himself. How could they put anything on him? He hadn't known what the Boss and his bloody crew were planning. It was up to them to stand for what they had done. They couldn't drag him into it. He hadn't——

In the midst of these thoughts Skillings arrived. Except for a certain glitter in his eye and a snappier, more springy suggestion in his manner, he looked the same. The hand that held the usual cigar was steady enough. His round face was no paler.

He stopped in the middle of the floor and considered Bradley. The Mayor was babbling just above his breath, pre-occupied with the newspaper spreads.

"What's the matter with you?"

The salutation made Bradley jump.

"What'd you do that for?" he demanded.

He snatched up the papers and waved them at the Boss.

Skillings' baby-blue eyes spread wider than ever; then narrowed. His lower lip stuck out, baring his teeth. In two steps he landed beside Bradley. He saw that the Mayor was very badly frightened.

"You poor—ham!" he snarled. "Tighten up that jaw of yours."

With his open hand he flipped the Mayor under the chin. His honor cursed as he bit his tongue.

"Keep it that way!" warned Skillings. "I'm going to do the talking—if there's any to be done."

Not urgently he pushed the frightened man back into his chair.

"Even if you do think anything's happened," he cautioned, "why shout it all around town? What's on your mind?"

The Mayor pointed again to the newspaper. This time, however, he kept his voice lower.

"I'm not in on that," he chattered. "If—if they get anybody, I didn't have any hand in it. You know that, don't you, Skillings?"

"Don't fool yourself like that," laughed the Boss unpleasantly. "You are in it. You were here—right here in your own office—when those boys were hired to do the job. Get that right."

Bradley got it all right! Like a sack of oats thrown into the chair, he lay, foolishly blowing little bubbles between his lips. It came to him like a blow that they would frame him to a standstill, if they themselves were nipped.

Locking the door, Skillings drew his chair close to the Mayor's.

"All you've got to do," he said, "is play up to the way you might be expected to act when your friend the police commissioner got all shot up. Don't cave in too much. You're too caved now. Spruce up. Have you sent word to the hospital that you're coming out? That helps. Got a drink around here? Where? Get outside some of it, then."

At a gesture from the Mayor he got a bottle from the lower drawer of his desk and poured a stiff drink. Bradley took it at a gulp.

"Now, listen to this," continued Skillings. "I've sent for Mulcahy to come here; yes, here! What y' whining about? With Mulcahy running the department, nothin' 'll happen there. We'll tend to the prosecutor's office, too, if anybody raises a howl over the police failure. Keep still till Mulcahy comes."

In the process of keeping still the Mayor had another drink. He was able to sit up with a little more stiffening in his spine when the acting commissioner arrived.

There was a trace of anxiety in Mulcahy's manner as he bustled in. He greeted Bradley briefly and turned at once to Skillings. He knew whatever instructions were to be given would come from him.

Skillings got right down to the subject.

"Given anything out about this?" he demanded.

"Not yet—except that we expect to land somebody before night." He regarded the Boss seriously. "That won't hold up long in this case, Boss. There'll be a yell for results."

"Give 'em results, then!" retorted Skillings. "Make a pinch. Take in a dozen, if you want to. But be careful who you take."

"That's it!" grumbled Mulcahy. "Suppose we get one that yelps?"

"See he doesn't get a chance. There isn't much chance of a mistake if you watch your step."

The acting commissioner gnawed his lips.

"It was an awful move to make!"

"You didn't make it, did you?" flared Skillings. "Don't you worry. All you have to do is see that the men assigned to the case don't know too much. Slip them word to round up a bunch of boobs that can prove alibis after a while. Get somebody you can hold till after Tuesday. Lock somebody up, and issue statements about coming confessions.

"And say," he elaborated the programme, "you'd better lead off with a confidential tip to the newspapermen that one of these gangs Fouts cleaned up is responsible. Name it, or don't, as you please. But tell 'em not to print the gang name if you do. They can write enough mysterious stuff around that to keep the clamor down."

Mulcahy showed that he did not relish the job. The chances were long. He could not dodge that fact. He was placing himself in the position of aiding and abetting. But he was helpless. There were certain items on his record since he had been placed at headquarters—before Fouts' time—as a reward for service to the machine which Skillings could turn against him.

"He's got a lot of friends in the rank and file," he said tentatively, even fearfully. "What if some of them go at the case on their own hook?"

"That's up to you to prevent. If any of them start that, file charges and suspend them, if you can't think of anything better."

"All right."

Mulcahy addressed the Mayor:

"There isn't a darned thing to work on except a couple of fake auto numbers. Fouts didn't see a face. I guess it'll be all right."

He meant to bolster Bradley's courage, but the Mayor only nodded.

"Don't mind him!" sneered Skillings. "Beat it, and give us something that'll look like action."

But Mulcahy had another question:

"How soon had we better make the first pinch? Today? Or will we wait till——"

Skillings shoved him to the door.

"I don't care a hoot when you do it. Use your bean, if you have any! But get a move on."

Having completed the operation of getting Mulcahy out, he swung back to Bradley. Rage gripped him at the spectacle of the Mayor's twitching face. A grating oath sounded between his teeth. He jerked Bradley to his feet.

"For the love of God, hold your face still or wrap it up!" he said malignantly. "You'd think you were headed for Sing Sing!"

He let go Bradley's collar. His Honor plumped back into his chair. Sing Sing! He spread his arms out on the desk and pillowed his head on them, sobbing. Sing Sing! To him it looked like nothing else.

*Her eyes had drawn together again and he looked steadily into their clear but now icy depths.*

## CHAPTER SIX

FIRM in the conviction that if he could clear up the shooting of Fouts he would be taking the quickest road to defeating gang tactics at the election, O'Grady followed that line.

From the hospital he returned to headquarters. The automatic pistol with which the shooting had been done had been found in the street. He wanted to see that. Later, the privilege doubtless would be denied him—after he had talked again with Acting Commissioner Mulcahy. He expected to be shut off from any and all evidence that might be unearthed. Besides, he expected to be given a detail that would prevent his taking any hand in the Fouts affair.

Mulcahy, of course, had known that he was lying when he said that he had been on leave. O'Grady was under no delusion on that score. He supposed, also, that Mulcahy had accepted the prevarication temporarily, only because of O'Grady's relationship to Skillings. Therefore, he desired to find out as much as possible without delay.

Casually, he inquired in the detective bureau what had been discovered about the shooting. Nothing, he was told. The automobile numbers supplied by the witnesses had drawn blank. The pistol had not yet been traced. They let him look at the weapon.

"It don't tell much," commented the detective who passed it to him. "It's probably changed hands half a dozen times, so we won't be able to get anywhere through it."

"That's so," agreed O'Grady.

He turned the pistol over in his hand and shook out the clip of cartridges. There were still six in it.

"Look out!" warned the detectives, "I guess there's one in the chamber."

He moved away to answer the telephone. Without think-

ing what he was doing, O'Grady shoved back the slide of the pistol and let the loaded shell flop out. With it came a half-inch of woolen thread.

Puzzled as to how that could have got into the gun, he sprang the slide back again and squinted down the barrel. There was something in it.

Taking a pencil from his pocket, he slit it lengthwise. With the sliver of wood he poked into the pistol and dug out a fragment of cloth.

A glance showed him that no one was paying any attention to him. He slipped the scrap into an envelope and put it in his pocket. He couldn't quite see how it had got into the pistol barrel. He could seek the reason later. It was evidence, however; he was immediately convinced of that.

And since it was evidence, he felt that it had better not fall into the hands of those upon whom would devolve the task of making a bluff at investigating the attack on Fouts. If they did get hold of it, O'Grady reckoned that snip of cloth would disappear as effectively as had the gunmen after they had done their job of attempted murder.

The detective returned to his side.

"Nobody been fooling with this?" asked O'Grady.

"What—the gun? It's just as it was when picked up a block away from where they plugged Fouts. Why?"

O'Grady slipped the odd cartridge into the clip with the others, rammed that home, and handed it back.

"Oh, nothing. You haven't a thing to work on, have you?"

The other pursed his lips in disgust.

"A clean getaway. If we get anybody, it'll be a fluke."

"Well," O'Grady smiled and winked, "maybe that'll please some folks. No word passed down yet?"

"Say, I've been thinking that myself," said his companion in a lowered voice. "What d'you know?"

O'Grady shook his head.

"Nothing. I was thinking, that's all." He looked at the clock. "I'll drift along," he remarked.

In his pocket he felt that he had what might prove to be the decisive factor in the case. This despite he was unable to account for the presence of those few threads in the pistol.

If no one had tampered with the gun, it must be in exactly the condition that had followed the firing of the shot. If that were so, how had any obstruction, even as slight as this, got into the barrel? For the bullet must have cleared out anything that had been there.

The cloth then, necessarily, had been introduced after the discharge of the bullet. It was unlikely that the gunman had stuffed it in. He had thrown his weapon away, within probably half a minute at the most, after it had done its work. And it had not been handled, except to pass it from one man to another, since that. What was the answer? It was a connecting link, O'Grady was positive. But how?

It was a clear day, warm for the time of year, and he walked on, mulling the puzzle over and over. Because he wished to keep it to himself, he had not dared examine the cloth minutely at headquarters. He turned into a café and settled himself in a corner to do so.

Under a good light he produced the few threads. They were a dark-gray, and at first presented an uncompromising aspect. It seemed, after all, so improbable that they could mean anything valuable in the way of evidence.

All he could make up his mind on was that the scrap had been torn violently from a piece of goods. That was indicated both by the frayed ends and the fact that it was such a little bit. There wasn't more than an eighth of an inch square, with one or two threads a trifle longer.

As he scowled over it he found that not all the stuff was gray. There were two dark-green threads. At that he sat up. It had been snipped from a piece of light texture suiting!

But how had it got into the gun? Identification of the manner of goods did not answer that. An idea came to him. He began to see some light.

The proprietor of the place was at the end of the bar. O'Grady knew him. He walked over.

"What sort of gun have you?" he asked.

"Automatic. Why?"

"Let's see it, please."

The bartender got it from a drawer beside the cash register. O'Grady unloaded it, working the mechanism back and forth several times. His eyes lighted up. The bartender watched him with interest.

"What's the scheme?"

For the second time that morning O'Grady evaded a query with, "Oh, nothing." He gave back the pistol.

He placed the envelope containing the woolen threads carefully in his pocketbook. They had taken on a real significance. His pulse quickened. He had something which the men who would attempt to protect the assailants of Calvin Fouts would give much to possess. They would go to lengths to prevent its use—extreme lengths. It would be necessary to move warily, if he would avoid an unfortunate "accident" of some sort.

In that scrap of cloth O'Grady saw the only probable means of convicting Fouts' assailants. Ignorant of its existence, as he did not doubt they were, they would face arrest calmly, fortified with the knowledge that their false alabis were complete in detail.

If he could but lay his hands on the men, however, he could destroy at least one of these alibis. He was sure of that.

It was a matter, then, of finding the men. He went at it strong in the hope that, with protection guaranteed, they would still be somewhere in the open.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

IT was that evening, Friday, that O'Grady called on Lila Joyce for aid. He had spent the hours since his discovery of the cloth in the gangster's pistol in studying the automobile license numbers.

By taking those which contained combinations similar to the two numbers supplied by the witnesses of the shooting, he finally had centered on a license which gave promise of developments. It was in the name of Joe Kinsella, and covered a vehicle for hire.

The woman leader was dressing preparatory to a speech-making tour that night when O'Grady reached her home. She hastened down to him.

"You said this morning that I could depend on you for help," opened the detective. "Does that still go?"

The girl eyed him a spell. She perceived the anxious expectation of his face.

"It does," she said. "What do you want me to do, Mr. O'Grady?"

"Does it include yourself?"

"Myself? I don't understand."

O'Grady sized her up from head to toe.

"Will you take a chance of running into trouble if it will help land the birds that shot Fouts?"

She hesitated, smiling.

"You want me to do—what?" She was still non-commital.

"You offered to lend a hand," he insisted doggedly. "Will you?"

His earnestness impelled her. Her features grew taut in resolution.

"If you have anything for me to do," she said quietly, "I am ready."

The high-held head, with its firm chin and steady eyes, won O'Grady's admiration. His own glance softened as he looked at her. He realized how she had made such a good fight for the suffrage cause that lay so near and dear to her heart. The light of high resolve in her face, and her heaving bosom showed him that here he had a partner who would serve him well in any enterprise that spelled danger. Yet he gave her warning so that she might draw back.

"You said you'd supply money and assistance if I need'ed either. You can give me all the help needed just now yourself."

She disregarded the hint.

"Go on."

"I ran across something this morning which may convict the man who shot Fouts."

His words made her eyes glitter, but she did not interrupt.

"With that tucked away," he went on, "I went hard at the job of finding the man it should send to prison. I think I have a good start on one of them. I want you to help do that."

The color fled from her cheeks at the more outspoken implication of danger. Only for a second. She moved to a chair nearer him.

"There were two automobile numbers to work on, you remember? One from the front of the machine, and the other from the rear—a different one. Both were composed of what we call the 'circle' figures—those made up of circles, you know—3, 6, 8 and 9. They are easy to doctor. A piece of putty makes a 3 into a passable 8 or 9. It also makes a 6 or 9 into an 8. A strip of tire tape turns an 8 or 9 into a 3, by blotting out part of the white embossing. Or, you can turn an 8 into a 6. Or—— But you see what I mean.

"It is simple enough to alter the number when it contains a group of figures like that by using some putty or tire-tape. And, what is equally important, it is just as simple to shift back to your real number. That can be done in a twinkling, whereas it takes a couple of minutes to change false number plates. All you have to do is strip off the tape, or slip a knife under the putty."

The man's confidence communicated itself to Lila Joyce. While she didn't suppose he had, still she asked:

"Haven't you told this to your chief at headquarters?"

O'Grady laughed.

"They're looking for me about this time," he replied scornfully, "to find out what I'm up to. I was to see Mulcahy, the acting commissioner, several hours ago."

She understood what that might mean to him. The attack on Fouts stood as proof enough of the unscrupulousness of the powers her visitor was defying.

"There are only three machines in town," resumed O'Grady, "that carry numbers containing all four circle-figures. One belongs to a millionaire. Another to a broker who is next thing to that. It's a bet they had no hand in the shooting. The third, and only one left, is owned by Joe Kinsella, who has a motor repair shop."

"I know him. I had the precinct he is in a year ago, and often wondered about him. But, though he ran in queer company, there was never anything to be gotten on him. Now——"

He got up and, going to the window, looked outside. It was barely seven o'clock, but already dark.

Lila Joyce waited silently. His hesitancy foretold that he was coming to the part she was to play; a part that would not be without risk. Her suspense was not prolonged.

"Since Kinsella knows me, I want some one to go ahead of me. He lives over his shop—has a wife. I want to know whether he is at home before I show up. I want to find out if his car is in the shop. If it is there, and he is not, I want to get a look at the machine."

Closely he watched the girl. She gave no sign of flinching. His nod of approval made her flush. She read in it an appreciation, a belief that she would bear up under the test; that he had no misgiving as to how she would carry out her mission.

She wasted no more time in explanations.

"Tell me just what to do," she said briefly.

"Can you use a gun? There may be trouble——"

Her eye, flinty and cold, stopped him.

"Never mind that. I can shoot—if need be."

"Good!"

He had given her every opportunity to revoke. It pleased him mightily that she had not. His face kindled at the thought of how well she and Calvin Fouts would fight, side by side! He recalled the brief scene in the hospital, when the wounded commissioner, at least, had shown something of where his heart leaned.

"Now, listen, Miss Joyce. Here is the program. It likely will be tame enough. You and I will ride over at once to Kinsella's place. You'll find out whether he is there. If he is, you'll hire him and his car to take you—anywhere. If he isn't, you'll say you wanted to hire him, and scurry back to me. I'll do the rest."

Lila got up. She pointed to a doll-like cabinet on a table in the corner.

"There's a phone, Mr. O'Grady. Will you call a machine? I have to cancel several engagements for to-night. I'll be with you in five minutes."

O'Grady remained in the seclusion of the limousine around the corner while Lila Joyce went around to Kinsella's shop. In the pocket of her loose coat she had a small revolver. She did not expect to have to use that, for her errand seemed so guileless that no suspicion could attach to it.

If any remark was made about her seeking out Kinsella to get a car, she would follow O'Grady's suggestion and say that her own had broken down near by. A policeman had told her that Kinsella's was the nearest place to get one. It was a flimsy story, of course, but it would serve.

Kinsella's, she found, was a three-story building, dingy-looking for want of paint. The ground floor had an automobile entrance and a big show-window which needed washing. The place was unlighted. In the murky interior she could make out a couple of autos and several motorcycles.

To the side of the store was a door leading to a stairway. She searched for a bell, but there was none. The door she found unlocked. She pushed it open, then hung back at the pitch black that confronted her.

Rather than enter this forbidding atmosphere she pounded on the door with her hand. No one heeded. She kicked at the panel with increasing vigor. When that, too, failed to bring results, she steadied her nerves and went on up the stairs.

The long, straight flight ended in a narrow landing. Cautiously she felt around. There was a door to her right. She rapped smartly on it. Her heart was pounding irregularly when the door opened.

A woman, short and plump, with quick-darting eyes, garbed in a bag skirt and jumper-blouse, peered at her out of the semi-gloom. Under her scrutiny Lila stammered:

"You have—an automobile?" She could think of nothing more intelligent to say.

With only a trace of accent the woman answered and questioned in a word:

"Yes?"

Two children crowded about her skirts. She spoke to them rapidly in Italian, as the crying of a baby sounded from inside.

Lila looked past her where the larger of the children, a sulky boy about eight years old, was slowly retreating, apparently in obedience to an order to look to the baby.

She had seen homes like this many times in her excursions on behalf of suffrage. But the gloomy, often odoriferous, interiors never failed to depress her and arouse forebodings of she knew not what. She brought her attention back to the woman.

"Can I hire the machine?"

The keen, dark eyes searched her. The abruptness of the answer was a surprise.

"No."

"Why not?" she insisted.

She felt, rather than saw, the sullen suspicion.

"My man ain't in."

Though she was consumed with eagerness, Lila affected disappointment.

"He is out with the car?"

"No."

The boy slunk back beside his mother, and the baby renewed its squalling.

"Then," Lila smiled, "isn't there some one else you can call to drive me?"

But her ruse to get the machine where O'Grady could inspect it was futile.

"Joe's got the key to the store."

Even as she spoke the woman made to close the door. Lila strove to complete her information.

"Will he be back soon?"

One dark eye peeked at her through the crack.

"I don't know," came the reply. And Lila found herself once more in darkness.

A panicky reaction gripped her. She leaned her hands on the wall to steady herself, and waited for the faintness to pass.

A stealthy movement came to her from behind the door. A scream rose to her lips, but she strangled it as the door opened an inch, and the penetrating eye looked her over again. She cast aside her bravery, and ran, stumbling, down the stairs.

The motley crowd that roamed the street stared at the well-dressed woman who covered the half block to the corner with shaky steps. Unmindful of them, she bundled into the limousine where O'Grady waited. Her excitement caused him to start up, fearing that some one was pursuing her. He saw none but curious faces turned his way.

Lila's laugh was a trifle high-pitched. She was ashamed of having lost her nerve, abashed that her exhibition might have spoiled everything by attracting attention.

She confessed that nothing had happened, and went on with a report of her conversation with the woman she presumed to be Kinsella's wife.

"Fine!" praised O'Grady. He assured that there wouldn't be time for her funk to upset his plans. "I'm going to Kinsella's now," he said.

She started to follow him from the cab.

"No." He blocked the way. "You wait here till I come back."

Determinedly, she shoved his restraining hand aside.

"I'm going with you."

Her composure had returned. In the glare from a store window falling on her face, he saw her expression set as it had been when she pledged her aid at Fouts' bedside.

"But this is where there may be trouble."

"I'm going," she repeated, and stepped to the pavement.

"Very well," he gave in. "Trail along back of me. I'll stir the lady up!"

## CHAPTER EIGHT

SIGNALLING to Lila to wait in the doorway of Kinsella's shop, the policeman went up the stairs she had descended so hurriedly a few minutes before.

His peremptory rap brought Mrs. Kinsella to the door. Her eyes flamed when they fell upon him. She did not know him, but his general build and appearance served to identify his occupation. She let him open the interview.

"Where's Kinsella?" he demanded, although he knew what her reply would be.

She looked at him vacantly, and replied in Italian.

"Cut that!" ordered O'Grady. "You speak English all right. Where is he?"

Her teeth showed in a vixen smile. She abandoned her subterfuge.

"I don't know." Her shoulders hunched expressively.

Again she spoke in her own language, to the boy who had followed her to the door: *"Vai a dire il tuo padre che i polizii so no qui."* He was moving away again, when O'Grady halted him.

"You stay here! Savvy?"

He turned back to the woman, showing his police badge.

"I want to get into the shop."

She didn't seem much interested.

"I have no key."

He challenged her roughly: "There's a side door. Let me in that way."

She began another denial.

"Come on." He reached to take her arm, but she whisked away. "Let me in, or you go to the station."

She advanced her first question: "What do you want?"

"I'll show you. Get the key."

She got it.

Taking the boy with him, O'Grady kept step with the woman. At the foot of the stairs she unlocked a narrow door into the shop. At O'Grady's command she switched on a light.

He tapped on the window, and waved to Lila to come in. Then he sent the woman and the boy to a far corner, and told Lila to keep watch over him.

"She's a vicious-looking devil," he remarked. "Let her see you have a gun, and shoot if she moves."

Without more ado he proceeded to give his attention to the two autos in the place. One was a small car with license plates that didn't contain even one of the "circle figures" on which he banked so much. The other was a heavy touring car, with top up and storm curtains down. And its number was 3389!

A satisfied exclamation broke from O'Grady as he stooped to examine the plate on the front. On the second figure there still adhered traces of putty where the gaps in the broken circle which made the figure had been filled in. On the 8 there was a sticky smudge where part of the upper circle had been covered to make it into a 6.

With the 3 and the 8 faked in that way the number corresponded to that obtained by the witness who had seen the front of the car—3869.

Aglow with success, he forgot, for the nonce, the difficulties he was storing up for himself in making this dis-

covery. He was stooping by the rear plate, noting that on it the 3's had been turned into 8's, and the 8 into a 3, when it came back to mind that he was bucking the organization.

He would have to fight to get his evidence before the court. If the department did not succeed in choking him off, the prosecutor's office would, though it came to the point of packing a Grand Jury which would return no bill.

There was also the possibility—probability, in fact—that he, himself, would be laid away, where he would be unable to present any evidence anywhere for a long time—perhaps forever.

A muffled curse came from him.

"Anything wrong?" called Lila.

"No," he grunted.

Then his wavering resolution steadied. He got out his jack-knife and hacked at the straps which held on the plates.

"No, by God, there's nothing wrong! It's very much the other way. We've got 'em."

Rapidly he cut loose the other license plate. They were under his arm as he addressed Kinsella's wife.

"I want an answer—straight and fast," he threatened. "When's Joe coming home? Where is he now?"

The woman's eyes popped, and she gave vent to a warning shout:

*"Guardati! Della polizia!"*

"Watch her!" yelled O'Grady, and whirled on his heel. His revolver was in his hand as he faced about.

A man was fading out of the side door. O'Grady fired low. The man stopped.

"Come in, Kinsella," the policeman nodded grimly.

His prisoner came gingerly forward, hands up.

Already a score of people, drawn by the shot, were clustering about the window. Several of them entered the stair entrance and blocked the doorway.

"Shut that door," O'Grady told Miss Joyce. He didn't dare let his prisoner get near enough the knot of people for him to mix in.

The girl backed away from the woman over whom she had been standing guard. Reaching the door, she had to take her eyes off Mrs. Kinsella while she drove back a couple of intruders at the point of her revolver. She was frightened, deathly frightened, but she held her coolness.

O'Grady had just taken Kinsella's gun away when Lila turned. His back was to the woman in the corner, and Mrs. Kinsella was poising a hammer to hurl at his head.

"Look out!" screamed Lila, raising her pistol. O'Grady ducked. As the hammer started on its flight Lila fired. The woman staggered away, clutching her arm and shrieking. The hammer crashed through the window.

Snatching advantage from the diversion, Kinsella leaped for the jagged hole from which the glass still was falling. Afraid to shoot because of the crowd outside, O'Grady lashed out with his foot and tripped him. Before his opponent could wriggle over to make a fight, the policeman's billy cracked him on the skull.

The crowd, jabbering excitedly and shouting, pressed closer, some of the bolder spirits purposing rescue. His pistol halting them, O'Grady stooped and took Kinsella by the collar, hauling him back into the store. His wife lay, a huddled moaning heap, in the corner, her boy whimpering over her.

"Good girl," muttered O'Grady to Lila, as she ranged at his side, ready with her gun. "Where in blazes are the cops?"

They were there. Two burly patrolmen fought their way through the clamoring throng, poking right and left with their sticks. O'Grady hailed them.

"Here!" he shouted. "It's O'Grady—Tom O'Grady. Get men and a wagon."

A police whistle shrilled a riot call. One of the patrolmen was climbing through the broken window.

"Say," O'Grady put his lips close to Lila's ear, "can you hide these plates—anywhere?"

She stared at him.

"Yes," she smiled, "I'll use them as a—a straight front."

She picked the number plates from the floor and retired to the rear of the shop. A minute and she returned, a little red in the face, and uncomfortable-looking in her posture. But the treasured plates had disappeared.

The clanging bell of the patrol wagon started the crowd a-scattering. The reserves, tumbling out before the machine came to a standstill, and charging with their sticks, found the street clear of people in front of Kinsella's shop.

The precinct captain who had responded to the call entered the shop through the broken window. Kinsella was sitting on the floor, glowering and defiant, rubbing with manacled hands the abrasion on his head that O'Grady's billy had made.

"You all right, Tom?" The captain spoke to O'Grady standing over his prisoner. "What's it all about?"

O'Grady hesitated. He wanted to play his own game without showing anybody how much he knew. Also, he wished to get Lila Joyce away with the number plates. He decided to be mysterious until that had been accomplished.

"Tell you about it later. Better call an ambulance for that woman," pointing to Mrs. Kinsella, who continued her sobbing lamentations. "I had to shoot her, when she got to heaving hammers."

"Where'll we take him?" The captain jerked a finger at Kinsella. "Station-house, or headquarters?"

"Headquarters."

O'Grady grinned behind his hand. He'd give them a jolt by bursting in with this first of the gangsters. That would be a greater bombshell, to walk Kinsella right into their midst without warning, than to have the word of his arrest come from the precinct.

"To headquarters, cap, to the acting commissioner himself. We'll leave the charge open. I'll make it when I get down."

The captain was surprised. "Aren't you coming along?"

"Sure; but I'll come in a cab. I've got to make a stop on the way."

The captain's eyes searched the shadows where Lila stood. He had been waiting for O'Grady to say something about her.

"Who's the other dame?"

O'Grady raised a finger—again mysteriously.

"We'll leave that open, too. She'll come along with me in the cab."

"Oh, all right." The officer was plainly aggrieved. O'Grady's "hush!" stuff had taken root. "If you want to hog it, Tom——"

"It isn't that. I'd like to have you in on it with me, but—I guess I'll have to play it alone."

The captain and one of his men climbed into the wagon with Kinsella. He could get on the inside of the case when they reached headquarters.

O'Grady ordered a taxi. Pending its arrival, he had Lila get into Kinsella's car, and dropped the curtains. He did not want her to be noticed any more than necessary.

Telling one of the policemen to stand guard over the machine, he started for the door.

"I'll be back in a minute. Don't let any one bother the lady."

He had to get rid of the machine in which he and Lila had come. That was essential to his plan. He could not afford to go to Headquarters in it, because he did not want the chauffeur questioned.

Walking to the corner where the machine was standing, he paid the man and saw him drive off. When he got back to Kinsella's, his taxi was there.

"Pull your hair down over your face as much as you can," he whispered to Lila. "And keep your head low."

She stepped out of Kinsella's car and, hand to her face, walked stiffly out. Heavy sheet tin certainly made an uncomfortable corset!

O'Grady gave the word, and they were off, without any of the policemen having recognized the girl.

"Looks like a good night's work," he commented briefly.

Her cheeks were burning with the imminence of victory—a double victory; both at the polls on Tuesday, and over the conspirators who had laid Calvin Fouts on what might well have been his death-bed.

"Yes," she breathed. And then a new fear assailed her, and she felt that she had been selfish. "But what of you? What—what is going to happen now? Won't they—— Aren't you in danger?"

"I'll look out for myself."

He called to the chauffeur to stop.

"You get out here," he smiled. "And get those plates planted where they'll have to dig for them. Then keep mum, and wait till you hear from me. Good-by."

She understood now why he had kept her out of sight. He proposed to use her as a club on the men who might attempt to silence him.

"Good-by," she said soberly. "I'll expect word—very soon."

"Don't take a cab home," he enjoined. "Go on a trolley."

She grimaced, and put her hands to her sides, where the auto plates were pressing cruelly.

"I had hopes of getting these out of here soon," she sighed. He hadn't thought of that.

"Well, you can get a cab up the street a way."

She remained a minute, watching until the auto disappeared, bearing O'Grady on alone to carry the fight to men who did not stop at hired murder.

## CHAPTER NINE

THE bottom fell out of Mayor Bradley's world that Friday night when, about ten o'clock, he got a phone call from Acting Police Commissioner Mulcahy. His presence at headquarters was demanded immediately. Mulcahy's voice testified that he was rattled—seriously so. The only information he would give the Mayor was:

"O'Grady is here. Skillings says for you to get down quick. O'Grady's got somebody."

Bradley quit begging for details only when Mulcahy hung up. Then he phoned Skillings, only to find that he had already started for police headquarters. Mayor Bradley did as he was bid, and went along.

In the commissioner's office he entered in time to hear Skillings' volley:

"You've gotta lay off, O'Grady—lay off now."

The Boss had halted in his stride in the middle of the floor. His eyes, like points of blue fire, were fastened on O'Grady, who sat grim, with jaw set tight.

Mulcahy was sitting straight as a ramrod, his whole attitude fraught with consternation. He glanced at the Mayor, and his cheeks puffed as he exhaled an anxious breath.

Skillings didn't look around. He took another shot at O'Grady.

"How about it? D'y' quit—or have we gotta make you?"

The Mayor's voice shook:

"What's wrong, Skillings? What's wrong?"

Skillings' teeth snapped together.

"Everything," he rasped. "We—you and I and some others—are up against it. This—this"—O'Grady winced at the epithet—"is doing his best to smear the deck. Get that into your bean, Bradley, and get hold of yourself. Now"—to O'Grady—"what about it, Mister Man?"

The truculent bulk of a man who had made and unmade mayors of the city and even governors of the State seemed to swell in his rage. He smashed one great, knotted hand into the other. He rocked on his heels before the policeman whom he was trying to bulldoze, waiting for the surrender that he anticipated. It did not come.

"You can talk your head off, threaten all you please," said O'Grady, without raising his voice, "and it won't get you a thing. I got a man that's wanted. I'll take him into court and convict him—and anybody that's tied up with him. That goes."

Skillings reverted to a line of attack which already had proved unfruitful.

"Where's the woman that was with you? Who is she?"

The precinct captain was in an adjoining room sweating blood and cursing himself for his exclamatory query when O'Grady had showed up without Lila. It was going to cost him dear for not having seen that she reached headquarters. Skillings had said so, and he knew that what Skillings said would go.

"You'll find out who she is as soon as you start something," retorted O'Grady. "And don't forget, she's holding evidence, in case anything happens to me."

"You're tough, aren't you?" sneered Skillings. His face bloated with anger. "But the toughest there is can get his like anybody else. What d'y' know about that?"

A tantalizing smile touched O'Grady's mouth.

"Going to pull off the job on me here?" he jeered, and instantly regretted it, for Skillings was about to fall on him with tearing hands.

It was Bradley who, in his dread, prevented an encounter. He went plucking at O'Grady's sleeve.

"O'Grady," he pleaded, "don't you see that everybody's sorry for what has happened? It was a mistake—a mistake. But"—he licked his feverish lip; its mutinous nerve jumped, distorting his cheek from chin to eye—"but what's done can't be undone. You know that, O'Grady. And—and—he'll get well all right. He'll soon be well."

It was pathetic supplication. But O'Grady shook his head.

"And you know, O'Grady"—Bradley couldn't get above a whisper—"you have to think of— our brother-in-law."

O'Grady laughed unpleasantly. He looked contemptuously at Skillings.

"Brother-in-law hell! I haven't any brother-in-law."

He stooped and picked up his hat from the floor beside his chair.

"Where's my prisoner, Mulcahy?"

Skillings pushed the Mayor out of the way. He thrust himself in O'Grady's path.

"You haven't any prisoner!" he shouted. "And you won't need your hat for a while yet. We aren't through talking. Sit down and think that over."

O'Grady sat down. He was willing to bide a while. It was practically sure that they wouldn't start any roughhouse there. An uproar, right in the commissioner's office,

would be too conspicuous to be suppressed, as he knew they were suppressing from the newspapers the fact that he had made an arrest.

He felt pity for Bradley, sprawling in his chair, a picture of racking misery. For Mulcahy, too, he was sorry. Mulcahy was being forced into a situation with which he was not in full sympathy.

Not so were his feelings regarding Skillings. Relative though the Boss was, O'Grady was steeled against him. Skillings had gone too far.

It was with an uneasy mind, however, that he watched Skillings and Mulcahy confer in an undertone at the far side of the room. It wasn't really a conference. The Boss did all the talking, and Mulcahy nodded now and then, while he frowned over the instructions that were being given him.

Once O'Grady caught a sentence: "But what about the woman?" It came from Mulcahy.

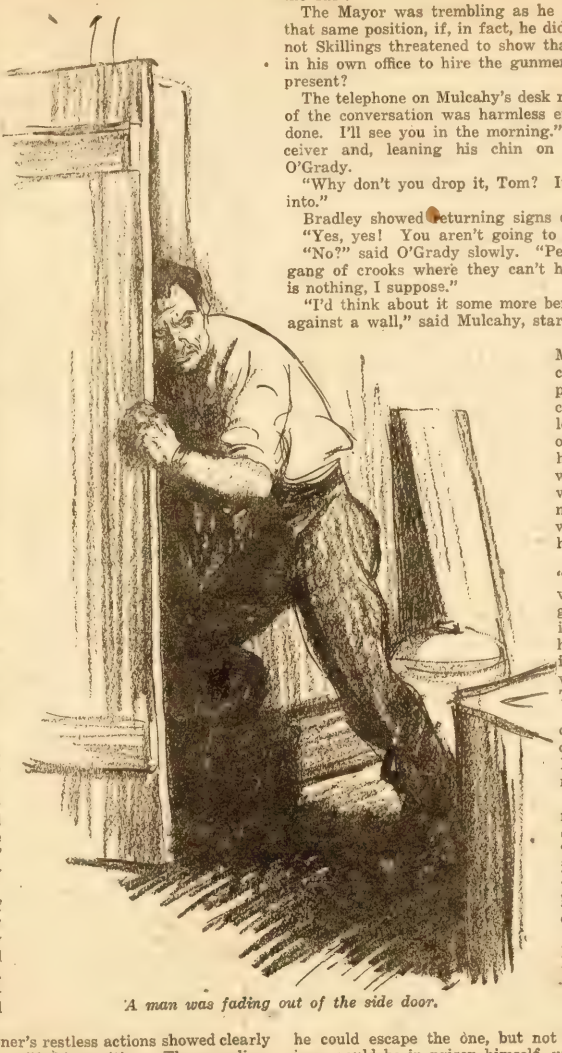
"Wait till we get to that," replied Skillings fiercely.

Finally the Boss made for the door. Bradley's dulled eye jumped to him.

"Wait a minute, Skillings. I—I'll go with you."

"You won't." Skillings' mouth screwed up. "You'll wait here till I tell you to go." The door slammed after him.

O'Grady thought of trying to bluff his way out—to declare simply that he was going, and see what would happen. He gave it up. Mulcahy, of course, would have him restrained.



*A man was fading out of the side door.*

The acting commissioner's restless actions showed clearly that he was not in love with his position. The complications were too great. He never would have consented to the shooting of Fouts, yet now, with Skillings and O'Grady in open clash, he was dangerously involved.

By rights, he should have locked Skillings up and taken steps to apprehend Kinsella's accomplices. He had done neither. If O'Grady ever got on the witness-stand, that would come out. Mulcahy would be an accomplice after the fact.

The Mayor was trembling as he thought of himself in that same position, if, in fact, he did not fare worse. Had not Skillings threatened to show that it had been decided in his own office to hire the gunmen? That he had been present?

The telephone on Mulcahy's desk rang sharply. His end of the conversation was harmless enough. "That's being done. I'll see you in the morning." He hung up the receiver and, leaning his chin on his hand, addressed O'Grady.

"Why don't you drop it, Tom? It's a bad mess to butt into."

Bradley showed returning signs of life.

"Yes, yes! You aren't going to gain anything."

"No?" said O'Grady slowly. "Perhaps not. Putting a gang of crooks where they can't hire any more gunmen is nothing, I suppose."

"I'd think about it some more before I busted my head against a wall," said Mulcahy, starting from the room.

Left alone with the Mayor, O'Grady saw a chance. He hadn't expected to get it. He crossed to a door that led, not into the outer office, but into a side hall, and tried it. It was unlocked. He was wondering whether to make a run for it, when the Mayor helped him out.

"O'Grady," he urged, "I'll do anything you want if you—you'll forget this. I wasn't in on it. That's true. God help me! They're framing me. You heard what Skillings said. They're framing me!"

O'Grady seized the opportunity. If he could make a deal with Bradley. He drew nearer.

"If you'll keep your mouth shut while I get out of here," he offered, "I'll testify that Skillings said that. If you won't, I'll forget what he said when the trial comes off!"

The Mayor made up his mind quickly. Better to expose himself to the menace of Skillings' vengeance than to go to prison. With care he could escape the one, but not the other. And Skillings would be in prison himself, unable to exact the penalty for his treachery. He drew himself upright, the side of his face moving spasmodically.

"Go on!" he agreed jerkily. "I'll keep quiet. Hurry. And, O'Grady, you'll remember that I wasn't in on it?"

The door into the side hall opening in his hand, O'Grady nodded. The lock clicked softly as it closed on him.

Bradley sank back into his chair, sweating in the reaction. He was saved! O'Grady would absolve him.

A harsh laugh interrupted his thoughts. Mulcahy had returned. He stared down at the Mayor.

"I hope you made a good dicker," he said bitterly. "I wish I could, and get away with it!"

That he made no effort to recapture O'Grady aroused in Bradley the feeling that something had been put over.

"What—what do you mean?"

Acting Commissioner Mulcahy moved wearily.

"You'll find out soon enough. Whichever way it goes, though, you're safe. If O'Grady gave you his word, he'll keep it. Let's hope something misfires again. I like O'Grady."

There were few persons moving about the building at that time of night, one o'clock, and O'Grady got out without being accosted. At the street corner he looked back, but there was no sign of pursuit. The lead was in his hands now, he exulted.

At a rapid gait he headed for a trolley line a few blocks away. He did not care to lose the time in that vicinity which stopping to get a taxi would entail. The sooner he got away from there, and the farther, the more secure he would feel. Furthermore, he wanted to confer with Calvin Fouts without delay.

He was within a block of the trolley car, moving north, when a man turned into the street from the east and approached him. Another cut in from the west and crossed diagonally to the side on which he was walking.

The two converged a few yards ahead of him, and, like a farmer, he walked between them. The next instant, he was staggering under a blow from a blackjack, striving to collect his swimming senses to put up a fight.

His fist smashed one of his assailants in the face. The other tripped him. As he fell, he managed to let out a shout for help. Worming aside, he escaped a kick aimed at his head.

He got to his feet and backed against the wall, shouting again at the top of his voice. Even in that stressful moment he heard heavy footsteps and the skirl of a police whistle. Desperately he strove to keep the men at bay. Another thirty seconds would do.

Together they rushed him, battering down his defense. He went to his knees under the rat-a-tat blow of a billy that is clenched in the hand instead of being swung free, so that it strikes springily as the fist contacts with the objective.

Half insensible, he retained sufficient control of his faculties to throw his arms over his head. He saw the billy descending, flying loose this time on the end of the thong about the wielder's hand. His arm broke the force of this final blow, delivered as his assailants ran. But it went home with effect enough to turn out the light for O'Grady.

The policeman halted a second over the unconscious form, then went on after the fleeing men. When he reached the corner they were nowhere in sight.

The sun was filtering through a drawn shade when O'Grady came to. It was some minutes before he recollected and made out that he was in a hospital. His head and left arm were in bandages. They pained him. His first thought was in condemnation of himself for walking into the trap. If he hadn't been so wrapt up in gloating over his triumph he never would have done it.

It was an old trick that they had pulled. Instead of coming up behind him, which, naturally, would have awakened his caution, the thugs had run around the block, one on each side of him, to head him off. He blamed himself again for having walked between them, especially when the general circumstances in which he found himself were such as should have stirred him to extreme watchfulness.

He saw, too, that Mulcahy had left the room to let him escape. They had calculated that if they told him he might go, after what had passed between him and Skillings, he would have looked upon his release from virtual captivity with suspicion.

A nurse appeared as he opened his eyes. He put a hand to his bandaged head.

"How bad is it, nurse?'

"Not bad," she smiled. "They say you have an iron skull. There isn't even the suggestion of a fracture, though you were struck three times."

There seemed to be a score of riveters at work inside his head, but O'Grady grinned happily. He held out his bandaged arm.

"And this?"

"A small bone broken. Nothing serious."

Now that her patient was awake, she raised the shade a foot. His grin died as he looked at the streaming sunshine.

"What day is it?"

The nurse laughed.

"Saturday."

"What time?"

"About half-past one."

"Then I've been out twelve hours?"

"Yes."

"Can I get up?"

"We—ll," the nurse hesitated. "Don't you think you'd better rest a while?"

He sat up.

"I think so—but I'm not going to."

The nurse propped the pillows at his back.

"We'll see what the doctor has to say about it. He'll be in about four o'clock."

"That won't do," insisted O'Grady. "Too late. Can't you call him now?"

She adjusted on his head the ice bag which had slipped with his movement.

"Is it really necessary?"

"Absolutely. I was going to visit somebody when those swine slugged me. I've got to see him right away."

She knew he was a policeman, and realizing that he quite probably had important work on hand, she did not try to balk his wish any more.

"I'll get the doctor," she agreed.

Another thought struck him. He called her back.

"Say, nurse, where am I?"

She laughed prettily. "Sanderson Hospital."

O'Grady beamed. Fouts was there, too! He saw possibilities in that. A scheme began to develop which would assist in the undoing of Skillings and his crew.

"How is Commissioner Fouts?" he asked eagerly.

"Fine," came the cheering news. "All he requires is quiet and lack of movement until the wound heals."

O'Grady drew his knees up under the covers and stretched an arm over them, pointing at the nurse.

"Please rush that doctor. I'm going to get up. But officially," he added cryptically, "I'm going to remain in bed; very, very badly battered—maybe dying!"

Earlier in the day, while the surgeons had been dabbing prying fingers over his skull, and taking X-ray pictures in the hunt for the fracture which fortunately wasn't there, Joe Kinsella had been arraigned. The charge was disorderly conduct.

The complaining officer testified that Kinsella had been intoxicated and had raised a rumpus in front of his shop. He had thrown a hammer through the window, but had done no other damage.

No reference was made to O'Grady's raid on the place, nor to the fact that Mrs. Kinsella had an arm in a sling, due to a bullet from a pistol in the hands of a girl.

Some of Joe's friends and neighbors who were in court tittered. But they said nothing.

Kinsella paid ten dollars fine and went home to pack a cheap grass suitcase, purchased on the way. He had required little urging to take a vacation—and leave no address.

## CHAPTER TEN

CALVIN FOUTS, flat on his back, and O'Grady, sitting beside him, his head swathed in bandages, chuckled at one another, and at Lila Joyce, seated at the other side of the bed. She smiled back at them. Their inning was nigh.

On Fouts' recommendation the hospital authorities had made public the information that O'Grady was near death. The man sent up by Acting Commissioner Mulcahy, on orders from Skillings, had found O'Grady tossing and groaning in seeming unconsciousness. Others who had called had been refused admission to his room because "the slightest disturbance aggravated his case." While they were being driven away the patient was talking with Fouts.

Lila had come, heavily veiled, in answer to their summons. The dark chiffon, now thrown back, emphasized the creamy complexion and the vivid lines of beauty.

Fouts found it hard to keep his eyes off her, and she, for her part, at times felt the blood mounting, under his all too-apparent admiration. She had to crush down a certain diffidence that forced itself into her manner to avoid becoming self-conscious.

But Fouts, alas, was at the blind stage, wherein he did not notice that. Which, perchance, was just as well. Otherwise he would have missed the million delicious spurting stabs of tremulous anxiety that, for the moment, gave pounding zest to life.

To O'Grady's vision, unimpaired by quick-blooming love, this by-play of the battle they were waging stood out in pleasant relief. As he silently applauded, he rejoiced that out of the blight that was soon to mar a score of lives would come at least one ray of brightness.

So, as he recounted his adventures with Kinsella the previous night, he did not stint the part that Lila Joyce had taken.

"That isn't quite true," she deprecated, and the ripply laugh that Fouts had learned to marvel at accompanied her protest. "To tell the real truth, I ran like a scared kitten—when there was nothing to run from."

"But when there was something to scare you"—O'Grady was bound to give her full credit before Fouts—"you didn't. You saved me then from having my block knocked off with a hammer."

Fouts' hand reached out shyly to hers. He didn't succeed in saying what he intended, for, in passage from his heart, it jammed somewhere about the roots of his tongue.

"I—ah—— Thank you, Miss Joyce," he managed to gulp. He was grateful when O'Grady came to the rescue.

"Humph!"

Both started guiltily and gave him their attention.

He didn't know yet what had been done with Kinsella. But he took it for granted that he had been let go. It was useless, at any rate, to look for information in that direction, because Kinsella would have had fresh assurance that he would be given protection if he kept his mouth shut.

"We have the goods on Kinsella," he voiced his thoughts tentatively, "even if he did not drive the murder car himself. But God knows where he is now. It's a bet he isn't in a cell. If we had him to ourselves," resentfully, "we'd get the dope on who went along on that trip. You didn't notice any of them—nothing that might give us a pointer on where to start anew?"

"No." Fouts was regretful. "There was only one person in sight, as far as I observed. He walked along a few steps ahead of me. He likely was one of the witnesses who got the auto numbers."

O'Grady's brows rose.

"Walked along ahead of you," he repeated. "Nope, I don't believe he chimed in. One witness was behind you, another across the street, and the third down Cantwell avenue where the machine speeded. Where was the man you refer to when you were shot?"

Fouts thought a minute.

"In a doorway right on the corner. He stepped in there when I was nearly up to him. He took my eye because he stopped on the corner and stretched hims——"

He ended in the middle of the word. O'Grady had jumped to his feet. His bulging eyes and parted lips, beneath the bandages, gave him a grotesque expression.

Yet neither Fouts nor Lila Joyce saw him that way. They were too intent upon what he apparently was about to say. Fouts had given him an idea—an idea in which he instantly believed.

"The Footer, by heavens!" He almost whispered it. His face broke into a hard smile. "The Footer!"

That didn't convey much. They blinked at him. He bent over Fouts.

"Did you tell them that?"

"No. I never thought of it until now. What's——"

O'Grady threw up his hands in jubilation.

"Don't," he commanded. "If they come after you for more information, it'll only be to see if you've been holding back anything. Hold that out."

"But, Mr. O'Grady," Lila's curiosity obtruded, "who is this Footer person?"

The policeman came back to earth.

"He's the next man we're going to get. He goes as Tony Meyer."

"That doesn't tell a whole lot," said the girl. "Why 'The Footer'?"

"Yes," interjected Fouts, "why?"

"He won't go into an automobile," elucidated O'Grady. "He passed four years in Sing Sing for a shooting from a car. Hence his wholesome hatred of them. But he can't get over being a gangster. We got him once, in a case like this, but he beat us, although he went to trial. Two other times he was dragged into cases the same way. But nothing could be put on him."

Lila spoke for both Fouts and herself:

"That doesn't sound so awfully promising, does it?" She felt he had exaggerated a flimsy clue. "If you've failed to—to 'put it on him' several times, how do you expect to do it now?"

But that didn't dampen O'Grady.

"Give me The Footer in a quiet corner and I'll dig it out of him," he declared, "if I have to use an axe. Besides, there's another we can take. The Footer's been running with Half-Arm Merkel lately. Half-Arm's a gunman from the word go. A likely man for them to pick in a case such as this. With him and The Footer corralled, we'll play one against the other in a nice dark cellar."

His confidence restored theirs somewhat.

"There's another point," said Fouts. "Where will you lock them up? How are you going to get around without being tagged and beaten again?"

"Easy," laughed O'Grady. "Haven't we had it given out that I'm cashing in with a broken skull? Nobody will be looking for me. Won't these bandages serve as a fair enough disguise if I do bump into any one? As for your first question, there's an old side-partner of mine who now runs a private agency. He has a dandy sound-proof room in his bureau that'll fill the bill. He'll lend a hand, and keep quiet about it."

The commissioner hid a smile.

"It will be rather—illegal, don't you think?"

"Illegal h——!" He broke off and Lila's eyes twinkled as he apologized.

It was then that it recurred to Fouts that Lila Joyce was interested in these happenings on account of her suffrage leadership. He experienced a pang of jealousy toward her organization, but he asked:

"How are the women hanging together as the election gets nearer?"

"I'm not worrying about how they'll vote, but about whether they'll be allowed to vote. If you had been there——"

"How do you know I won't?"

"How can you?"

"I haven't been removed yet," he teased. "Will we tell her how we've doped it out, O'Grady?"

"Might as well." He shot an amused glance at the com-

missioner. "It will give you an excuse to carry on the session, for I'm going. We've got to have action before Monday. That gives us about thirty hours at the outside. It'll be dark in another hour. I'll phone the private cop to meet me. I may look in on you again before I go."

He chuckled and left them. In his opinion their heads were closer together than was altogether necessary.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

BEFORE daybreak, Sunday, Tony Meyer, *alias* The Footer, and Half-Arm Merkel had been rounded up by O'Grady, the private detective, and half a dozen of his men.

The Footer was taken within a few hours. He made no struggle. Indeed, he sneered, remembering the guarantee of safety under which the shooting of Fouts had been undertaken. He was further contemptuous because of the previous occasions on which the department had been forced to turn him up. There had been no direct evidence then. He was confident that none existed now.

In fact, he was inclined at first to treat the affair as a joke on the people; a grandstand flourish, which the exigencies had unexpectedly demanded. He hinted as much to his captors—O'Grady was not present—and they did not illuminate him.

But he was undeceived when he was led into the private agency and unceremoniously dumped into the padded room. It was then that The Footer really commenced to wonder if all was well.

With Half-Arm Merkel it was not so easy. The front end of his name came from the fact that his right arm was little more than half-grown. Yet it was his gun arm, just the same, and, so far as utility was concerned, suffered no handicap through lack of normal size.

There had been times when he had found the diminutive member worth more than a full-grown arm. Its very shrunkenness made it look innocent. It could be insinuated to connect with the pistol, carried under his left armpit, without attracting great notice.

Half-Arm was at a dance when O'Grady located him. Since it was a gathering which might readily produce a whole battery of guns, the policeman and his aids lurked in the offing until it broke up. They were no more desirous of publicity than of having additional casualties.

Four o'clock was striking when Half-Arm left the hall alone. His shadows rushed him, and though he fought he could not get at his gun. As they finally tore it away O'Grady poked his weapon into the gangster's stomach.

Merkel grunted and became passive.

"Whatd'y'callit?" he asked in one word. "A hold-up?"

"Call it what you please, Merkel," O'Grady informed him easily. "We'll find the correct name later on."

The gunman twisted his head to get a clearer view of the speaker, whose hat was pulled low to hide his bandaged head. A curdling oath sizzled on his lips. His cruel, crafty face lost its impudence, and the slitty eyes glared in amazement.

"O'Grady!" Another row of curses. "They said you were passing out last night."

"I did." O'Grady was tickled by his own humor. "I passed out of the hospital to get you and The Footer. We got him hours ago. He's talked, Merkel."

"You're a liar! You——"

The gangster bit off his speech. His nerve came back. When he got to headquarters it would all be fixed. He yawned.

"Say, where do we go from here?"

"Not far. Come on, boys."

Handcuffed to a detective on either side, Merkel swaggered through the knot of spectators.

But, like The Footer, he began to see things in a different light when he was not taken to headquarters. He put up a howl, but it didn't help. He, too, landed in the private detective bureau.

O'Grady's face was radiant when he beheld his latest prisoner under a bright light. He slapped him on the back good-naturedly.

"I'm glad there was nobody at that dance to-night that you cared much about, Merkel."

It sounded like a trick question. The gunman didn't answer. He wanted to get the situation straight before he said anything.

"You saved me a lot of trouble," went on O'Grady, "by not dolling up."

The narrow eyes rested on him malevolently. Half-Arm pulled away as O'Grady brushed a hand over his shoulders. The next remark got his goat.

"Nice suit you've got on, eh?"

Merkel detested being puzzled. He looked himself over, then at the policeman, his teeth showing under the snarling lip.

"What's that gotta do wit' it?"

"You can visit with your friend The Footer now," was all the answer he got.

And as he made it O'Grady's eyes feasted on a snip that had been torn out of Half-Arm's coat.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

ON monday morning, the day before election, Calvin Fouts carried the storm-center into the Skillings-Bradley camp. He issued an order, from his bed in the hospital, transferring two inspectors from downtown districts where repeating, in past years, had become a recognized and accomplished art.

The order was addressed to Mulcahy, as deputy, and signed by Fouts, as commissioner. An accompanying note instructed Mulcahy to execute it without delay.

Mulcahy immediately sent a chaser after Skillings. He knew that the gang could not permit such an order to go into effect.

The inspectors concerned, whom Fouts consigned to outlying districts, were depended upon to see that the bands of repeaters were given adequate leeway. The officers whom the commissioner nominated to take their places were not of the same stamp, and might be swayed by honest motives to act on the protests which undoubtedly would arise over the proposed tactics at the polls.

Several hours passed, however, before Mulcahy got in touch with the Boss. Meantime, the newspapers announced the transfer of the inspectors. Fouts had already sent out copies of his order for publication. That was part of the plan, decided upon at a conference on Sunday with Lila Joyce and O'Grady.

There was blood in Skillings' eye when he arrived at headquarters. He had seen the newspapers on the way down.

"Who gave 'em that?" was his first question.

Mulcahy looked tired. The assault on O'Grady following the ruthless shooting of Fouts had sickened him. In his heart he found a mead of satisfaction that Skillings was at last being driven into the corner. He shrugged his shoulders.

"I haven't shown it to a soul. Been waiting for you to take hold."

The Boss blasphemed. The maneuver of Fouts' was hard to fathom.

What did he expect to gain? It was a test of authority, that was plain, but Skillings thought he was prepared to meet it. If the commissioner expected it would lead to his summary dismissal, with the boomerang that would create for the administration, he was wrong.

The Boss stumped back and forth. His pale eyes snapped. Sure, he could stop Fouts, if that was his intention.

"Get Bradley."

Listlessly, Mulcahy obeyed.

He had not told Skillings that the Mayor, for his own salvation, had made a deal with O'Grady three nights before. He didn't quite know why he had not done so, other than that he had grown sorry for Bradley. He

found himself hoping that the Mayor would escape, if the crash actually took place.

While they waited the coming of the Mayor, Mulcahy lounged by the window, wistfully staring out. He cursed himself for having become so entangled in the dirty skein woven by Skillings. He felt that the end was very near. But he never thought of squealing to save himself.

Endlessly the Boss wandered up and down.

"Get the corporation counsel," was all he said. Mulcahy roused himself to make the call.

The lawyer came in close behind Mayor Bradley. It was to him that Skillings addressed himself.

"I want an opinion—quick, attested by a judge—that Mulcahy is acting police commissioner, because"—his fist thumped the desk—"because the commissioner is incapacitated."

The city attorney scratched his head. He belonged to the machine, and would do what was wanted, but——

"He is acting, isn't he?"

A nervous wreck, the Mayor hopped from one foot to the other, nodding vapidly. He was still in the dark, regarding Fouts' action. This proceeding was Greek to him. Who would be acting commissioner, if not Mulcahy?

Skillings tapped the lawyer on the breast with a gnarled finger. He thrust his splotchy face close.

"You're here to listen, not to ask questions. There's the charter." He pointed to the open volume, lying ready on the table. "Read that provision, if you don't know it, and tell us whether the opinion will hold."

*In backing up, Skillings bumped into two policemen.*

"It will. I know the section. The deputy acts during the absence or disability of the commissary. I guess Fouts is incapacited within the meaning. He's unable to be here on the job. That's enough—he isn't able to administer the department."

The Boss handed him his hat.

"Get that opinion out at once, and date it last Friday. That's all. I'll look for you back here in an hour."

He laughed, and turned to Mulcahy.

"How's O'Grady?"

The deputy's face hardened.

"Bad. I had a man up to see him last night. He hadn't recovered consciousness."

"Too bad!" Skillings snat out the chewed end of a cigar. "Ain't he got a chance?"

"I guess not." Mulcahy was short. He disliked to think of this part of the conspiracy, and he disliked Skillings' attitude toward it considerably more. He walked away.

"Come here!"

He returned to the desk. The Boss regarded him sharply.

"You don't seem as interested as you might be, Mulcahy."

Their eyes locked. The reply was quiet:

"Frankly, I'm not."

The confession met a sneer.

"Want to quit? To go tell all you know somewhere?"

The deputy paled with anger.

"I'd like to, but—I won't. Get on with what you've got to say."

An explosion halted on Skillings' tongue-tip. He resolved to deal with Mulcahy later.

"Get this!" His words rattled out. "Fouts wants us to fire him. That's why he made these transfers. He knows we won't—can't—stand for them. The infernal newspapers are waiting for us to throw him out. That'd be their meat, and it'd swing the election."

The Boss would have given a million dollars to know what Fouts was holding back, in case his ruse failed to provoke action. If he could have seen The Footer and Half-Arm Merkel raving in that soundproof room!

Bradley gazed fearfully at the man who owned him. Mulcahy contemplated the dictator with an appraising thought. He was beginning to find glee in the prospect that Skillings would feel the pinch. He enjoyed raising an obstacle.

"When the transfers aren't made Fouts will mandamus us."

"What of it?" Skillings had reckoned on that. "The election would be over before the application was heard."

Somewhat timorously the Mayor spoke up:

"He might take an easier way to bring it all out—by quitting and making charges."

The Boss waved the idea aside.

"What's he got to make charges on? With that fool O'Grady laid away, there's nothing doing. What? O'Grady's woman? Ugh!" he dismissed that. "No! Fouts won't quit. He'll make this fight from the inside." He smiled ruefully. "We sure did pick a bloomer when we picked him!"

They let him do the talking.

"Mulcahy's got it. Fouts' next move will be for a mandamus. That is why we're getting the opinion from the corporation counsel. It will show that Fouts was not in a position to issue orders. That Mulcahy, as acting commissioner, had a right, in the circumstances, to ignore the order on the assumption that Fouts didn't know what he was doing. It'll be easy to stall argument on the writ until to-morrow afternoon. By then it will be too late to do any good."

He paused as there came a knock on the door. A secretary entered and handed an envelope to Mulcahy. The first deputy laughed softly as he tore it open. The hand-

writing was Fouts', and the letter contained another list of transfers.

A score, this time, including captains and inspectors in all the organization wards, were shuffled to distant territory.

Without comment, Mulcahy handed the slip to Skillings, and laughed again to himself at the fury spreading over the mottled face. Hardly had the outburst subsided when the secretary reappeared.

"The newspapermen, Mr. Mulcahy, want to know if the transfers have been made."

The deputy looked at Skillings for guidance. It was Skillings who answered.

"Tell 'em they've been ordered."

"The last batch, too? The captains?"

If Skillings had said it out loud the woodwork would have scorched! Fouts was riding him hard!

"They've been ordered. And say—— If anybody else asks anything, the commissioner is busy."

In fifteen hours the polls would open. Provided he could retain control of the police department without having to oust Calvin Fouts, Skillings counted the election as won. In the belief that by trickery he could keep that control, he proceeded to recite the final instructions to Mulcahy.

These included the swearing-in of scores of thugs as special policemen. To avoid too much notice, this was to take place after midnight.

This settled, he started out to make the rounds and see that his lieutenants and their army of toughs were ready to debauch the franchise.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

WHILE she wasn't aware of it, Lila Joyce did more that night to make Calvin Fouts well than a dozen doctors could have accomplished—that is, if the condition of the mind really governs the condition of the body. For Fouts was transported through her to at least the sixth heaven.

For two hours she had been pleading with him to abandon his scheme. It was that which pleased him so mightily—the concern she showed for his welfare.

She even laid her hand on his in her earnestness. And, apparently, she did not think it strange when his other hand had imprisoned it.

"I won't be in any danger, Lila!"

He smiled at the way her name came spontaneously to his lips. She looked a bit startled. She flushed; made as if to take her hand away from his—then let it stay.

"The doctors are opposed to it," she persisted.

"Of course they are. But they don't absolutely refuse their sanction. They simply say it is unwise to take a chance in the shape I'm in."

She stamped her foot.

"I—I'll never speak to you again"—childishly—"if you don't stay here in bed! Let the election go hang!"

The wounded man, who had made great progess in the four days since he was shot, wagged his head in the negative.

"You wouldn't have me do that. There's nothing personal on my part in this fight. As you know, I took the police commissionership with a set purpose. I knew I was being used when it was offered me. Notwithstanding, I accepted, solely to carry out one ideal I've always had, if that were possible. I wanted to witness an election free from gang tactics and terrorism.

"That it has almost cost me my life, only makes me more determined. And"—he looked up into her iridescent eyes, hungered for the satin cheeks and rounded lips that were so near, "and that is what you would have me do. You would not have me give up now, Lila?"

She averted her eyes, and he repeated his question.

"No." She arose from his bedside. "I would not have you give up."

When he came in ten minutes later, O'Grady looked from one to the other in doubt.

The girl was standing, staring at nothing, a faint smile on her face. Fouts wore a vacuous expression. His fingers clutched at the bedspread. An impersonal observer might have said they had quarreled. He'd have been as far from the mark as possible.

True, they hadn't exchanged a word since she had grudgingly endorsed his decision to go through with his self-appointed task. But their silence seemed to be heart-filling enough.

O'Grady's manner was triumphant, laden with excitement.

He leaned his uninjured hand on the foot of the bed.

"All ready," he reported. "When do we start?"

Lila looked at her watch.

"It's 11.45."

Fouts stirred on his pillows.

"Ring that bell for the nurse, O'Grady, please. We'll get down there about one o'clock. How many men have you?"

"Forty?"

"Are they all trustworthy? No chance of a leak?"

"Every one O. K. I've told them what they are to do. It will move like clockwork."

A nurse came in answer to the bell.

"Will you have the ambulance out now, please?"

She nodded, and bustled out again.

"How about the newspapers?"

"They've all been notified that you will have an important statement to give out early Tuesday morning," replied Lila. "The morning papers can hold their last edition for it until five o'clock. The afternoon papers said they would have men down early to handle it, on the promise that it would be red-hot."

Two orderlies appeared with a stretcher on a truck. They loaded Fouts on it, handling him carefully to avoid straining his wounded lung. With O'Grady and Lila Joyce walking alongside, he was wheeled to the elevator. A few minutes and he was aboard the waiting ambulance. The woman leader stepped into the machine with a doctor.

"This trip isn't going to hurt him?" she asked the surgeon in a low voice.

"Not if he keeps quiet and doesn't exert himself."

O'Grady put his head through the door.

"I've told your driver to hang back until the other machines get there and we're all set. You'd better not show up too soon. We're off."

He ran to the corner and climbed into the first of a line of standing limousines. It started at once, and one of the queerest excursions on record was under way.

The seven other machines moved, and like that containing O'Grady, each one was crowded with blue-coated policemen. The ambulance gave them a few blocks headway and followed.

Police headquarters was about to be raided!

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

UNDER O'Grady's business-like direction his squad dropped from the machines on all four sides of the building.

Every man knew exactly what he had to do. Some took post at the doors. Others established a patrol around the place. Most important of all, a party headed by O'Grady himself made its way rapidly inside and took charge of the telephone switchboard, the telegraph system and the electric light plant.

"Commissioner's orders," was the only information they gave to the amazed men whom they displaced. They showed their authority in Fouts' handwriting.

No message could go out except through their hands. No person could leave the building without O'Grady's personal permission. Whoever entered had to stay inside.

Commotion reigned in no time. A subordinate ran in and notified Mulcahy, in whose ante-room, and in the hall

outside, the crowd of gangsters were lined up being sworn in as deputies. He snatched up the telephone and gave a number in an effort to get Skillings.

The operator refused to make the connection. "Commissioner's orders."

"Commissioner nothing!" yelled Mulcahy. "This is the com——"

The instrument fell from his nerveless hands.

The strangest procession he ever had seen enter that office was passing through the door. Two men bore a stretcher on which was Calvin Fouts. Lila Joyce walked at his side, and O'Grady and the doctor in the rear.

White as the sheets that covered Fouts, Mulcahy bent forward, half-risen from his chair. He could find no word to say as he watched the orderlies lay the stretcher down gently.

With set face Fouts looked up at him.

"I'm sorry, Mulcahy, but you are relieved of your duties. You are summarily removed from office—effective this instant."

The man who had been deputy commissioner straightened and squared his shoulders. He seemed suddenly to become old, the corners of his mouth falling, and the lids going heavily over his eyes.

"I—I'm glad," he said, and turned to look out into the darkness. The end had come. But he felt a glow of satisfaction. It was the end for Skillings also. His head came around as Fouts spoke:

"You will remain here, Mulcahy—technically under arrest."

There was something pathetic in the figure by the window, his palms pressed to his face, thinking of what was before him. A quiet sob broke from Lila, and the tears started to her eyes.

Fouts' lips compressed. His sympathy went out to the man he had broken. He did not blame Mulcahy; but the system in which he had been brought up. It had been in the hope of reclaiming him that he had continued him as a deputy for the past eight months.

O'Grady's hand touched Mulcahy's shoulder. He echoed Fouts' opening words:

"I'm sorry, old man!"

They brought a feeble smile.

"I thought you were pinching me." Mulcahy tried to jest—not braggartly, but sadly. "There's just one thing, O'Grady—I'm not yowling for mercy. But I didn't know they were going to slug you and shoot Fouts. Before God, I didn't!"

He took the hand O'Grady silently offered.

"I'm glad it's all over," he said once more. "I've been getting sick and tired these last few days."

He leaned an arm on the window and resumed his staring without bitterness toward the men who had brought about his downfall.

"You, O'Grady," Fouts resumed, "will take active charge of the department as deputy commissioner under my supervision. I want every precinct commander here within the hour."

"I've already issued a general order, sir."

Mulcahy spoke over his shoulder:

"There's a mob in the next room, and in the hall, that you'll be interested in."

"Thanks. They're already cluttering a whole bunch of cells." O'Grady grinned at Fouts' querying glance, and explained: "He refers to about eighty or ninety gangsters we'd be rounding up later. Finding them here cuts down our labor."

It was a case of waiting until the precinct officers arrived. The last of them got in by three o'clock.

There was an uncomfortable shuffling of feet among the fifty-odd men who packed the room to listen to the wounded commissioner. None knew just what to expect. All were surprised by this unaccountable situation.

Those among them who were on speaking terms with honesty evinced only curiosity. Those who were cogs in the machine were uneasy.

So that he might see them better while he talked, Fouts had the stretcher on which he lay placed on two desks pushed together. By moving his head to one side he could look directly at the men to whom he was about to issue his orders with an ultimatum for those who might have to be coerced into doing their whole duty.

In low tones, devoid of any apparent feeling, he put the issue up to his subordinates, coming briefly to the point.

"Three hours from now an election will start. It rests largely with you men whether it is to be conducted fairly or unfairly. Throughout the city there are scattered, in almost every district, bands of men who purpose voting, but who have not the right to vote. They, and others, will endeavor to intimidate legitimate voters—particularly the women. They are not going to be given the opportunity to do that." He stopped a moment to lend emphasis.

"It is my order that every person suspected of any such intention, every known or supposed gangster, be arrested before the polls open, or as soon afterward as possible. By that I mean that they must be sought out and taken into custody regardless of protest from any quarter whatsoever, regardless of any attempt to protect them.

"If some among them are falsely arrested, they have recourse in law, and may sue me. I shall make such a statement public. Your duty is to seize these men, the majority of whom are known to you, or to your patrolmen and detectives. You will be given a list of gangsters imported from other cities for this occasion, and where they can be found. That is practically all—except that no excuse will be accepted for failure to carry out this order."

There was a renewed shuffling in the surcharged atmosphere. It was all too evident that Fouts was in deadly earnest. He looked around at Lila Joyce, who kept her place beside him. But, even then, the sternness of his face never relaxed.

Again he turned to his precinct commanders.

"One word more. You know that I am a man of wealth. Remember that, when you hear what I am going to say. Every cent I have will be spent, if necessary, in prosecution of any police officer who fails to perform his duty this morning, and all through the day. Though I may no longer be commissioner, I, as a citizen, shall press such charges against those who are guilty of dereliction—press them, if it takes my last penny. That's all, men. I look to you."

For one seeking studies in expression, these officers, to each of whom was delegated the task of upholding the peace and dignity of a section of the city, offered bountiful field, as they filed out.

To some Fouts' mandate was a relief, for it meant that they would not be hampered in the execution of their task by either ward politicians or the men higher up. It meant that when they made arrests their prisoners would "stay put." They would not be released within an hour, on the surety of professional bondsmen, hired by the organization.

To others, the order was a thing to scorn—at least so they thought. But before the first vote was cast that day they were to learn that they were wrong, that, to save their hides, they must fall in and join in the clean-up.

When they had gone, Lila Joyce, still fresh and fair, despite that she had not slept, murmured her approbation. It was for the commissioner's ears, and he alone heard it.

"The smashing of Skillings and his machine will reward you for the suffering of the last four days," she said.

"There is a greater reward than——"

He swore, under his breath, as O'Grady cut in.

"I've found the cot set up for you, Mr. Fouts. And I've had Mulcahy telephone Skillings and Bradley to come down here." His face clouded. "I don't quite make Mulcahy out. He phoned the message I dictated, without trying to add anything about you being here. Then he wandered back to the window and settled again into his trance. He—he acts queer, don't you think?"

Lila's hand went out impulsively to Fouts.

"He looks as though he might be a man, back of everything. Isn't there some way—can't we do anything to—to help him?"

The commissioner turned his eyes from hers. He could not bear to see the hurt in them.

"I'm afraid not. I wish we could. There is no way out. Mulcahy will have to fall with the others."

Another period of waiting.

Shifted into the cot that had been brought from the hospital and installed in his office, the commissioner rested, and chatted with Lila.

O'Grady went about the direction of the affairs of the department, preparing the final orders to be put on the wire at three o'clock, and passing on those who entered, or sought to leave headquarters. Outside and in his patrol kept ceaseless guard.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SKILLINGS got there first.

The men posted at the door gave him some sort of a premonition that all was not well. He checked his stride, made as if to put a question, changed his mind and hurried on.

Passing through the outer office leading to the commissioner's private room, his quick roving eyes noted again the heavy air that hung over the place, the strange glances sent his way.

Unceremoniously he opened the inner door and plunged, rather than walked, in. His haste was occasioned by the foreboding that had grown upon him with every step since he entered the building.

On the threshold he recoiled. His eyes goggled at the spectacle of Fouts in the cot. For once in his life words failed him.

His glance moved to O'Grady and his jaw hung. He had reckoned O'Grady as good as dead, and here he was, his bandaged head testifying to the brutal assault that had been made on him, but very much alive.

Next, his dazed brain recorded the serious face which Lila Joyce bent upon him, and he realized too late who had been with O'Grady in the raid on Kinsella's shop.

"Come in, Skillings," Fouts invited.

Involuntarily the Boss stepped backward. He saw the trap that had been laid for him, and he feared the crushing force with which it would be sprung. In backing up he bumped into two policemen who silently had drawn close, barring his way.

"You might as well come in," said Fouts. "The way out will be closed for some time."

The bulldog nature of the man overcame his momentary rout. He stuffed his hands into his pockets and advanced into the room. Not until then did he catch sight of Mulcahy, who had not moved from the window for an hour. He ignored Fouts.

"Want me, Mul?" he asked, with an effort at jauntiness.

The ousted deputy looked around, shaking his head.

"No."

Skillings showed his teeth, while his contracted eyes jumped here and there, sizing up the situation.

"You called me, didn't you?"

"Yes. Commissioner Fouts wants you."

"Fouts!" The Boss heaved his shoulders. "He ain't commissioner."

"You mean," corrected Fouts, "that Mulcahy isn't in the department any longer?"

He nodded to O'Grady, who signaled in turn to the policeman standing behind Skillings.

Each laid a hand on his arm. His face blazed with anger as he tried to shake them off. The last vestige of color left it. He became still again as Fouts' words reached him.

"Mulcahy is in the same predicament as you. He is under arrest. So are you."

With a bellow the Boss whirled his arms. But the men who held him were as powerful as he.

"Y' can't get away wit' it," he shouted, dropping into the vernacular that went best with his life and his appearance. "What'n the devil's eatin' yuh, Fouts? Y' crazy?"

The commissioner viewed him calmly. Lila Joyce leaned forward, her bosom rising with such breath fast taken in awe at seeing another man crucified.

"You are charged," went on the commissioner dispassionately, "with attempted murder in procuring men to kill O'Grady and myself."

The accusation acted like a cold douche on Skillings.

"Grhhh!" His features twisted in derision. "Where d'y' get that stuff? Whacha shootin' at?"

His wrists tight in the grip of the policemen, he threw his weight on them, his face thrust aggressively toward Fouts. O'Grady stepped out of the room. In a minute he returned with Tony Myer, *alias* The Footer, and Half-Arm Merkel, handcuffed together.

They slunk in fright when the significance of the scene broke on them. Like statues they stood, gawping at Skillings—Skillings a prisoner like themselves! While he, in turn, was transfixed by this new bolt that threatened to crumple his edifice.

From a drawer in the desk O'Grady produced the license plates which he had taken from Kinsella's automobile. Laying them silently before Skillings and the gangsters, he took the center of the stage.

"These are going to go a long way toward convicting you, but they are not all."

From his pocket he took an envelope and shook out the fragment of cloth he had taken from the automatic with which Fouts had been shot. Also a magnifying-glass, and the pistol itself.

A gasp from the door caused them all to look up. Mayor Bradley was there, pawing at the jamb for support.

"Put him in a seat," said Fouts. "The poor devil is all in."

A policeman who had followed the Mayor supported him to a chair. He sat there mumbling, the nerve in his face jerking more hideously than ever, only half comprehending what was taking place.

O'Grady held the magnifying-glass over the scrap of cloth so that Skillings could see.

"That matches the suit this man is wearing." He pointed to Merkel. "I found it in this pistol, and, if you ask Merkel, you'll find that when he shot Calvin Fouts he rested the pistol on his left arm to steady his aim. Isn't that so, Merkel?"

"Naw! I didn't shoot nobody!"

"He rested the pistol on his arm"—the denial went unheeded—"and as the slide sprang back from the recoil to eject the empty cartridge, it nicked his coat sleeve. It's all perfectly simple, Skillings. You can see for yourself where the piece is out of his left sleeve."

With a cursing snarl the gangster raised his free arm, the shrunken one.

"It's a frame-up!" he yelled. "I didn't——"

Skillings' voice was hard, and his eyes brazen.

"What's this to do with me?"

"We'll show that you ordered the job when the time comes."

"How?"

"Circumstantial evidence——"

Skillings laughed, and his pallid face brightened. If that was all they had—provided the gangsters didn't squeal.

"Circumstantial evidence, and a confession from The Footer."

Tearing loose from his guards with a sudden wrench, Skillings made a dash for the squealer. Floundering out of his way, Meyer pulled Merkel with him. Half-Arm's feet got mixed by the unexpected movement and he fell with his fellow prisoner.

Skillings leaped and wove his fingers into The Footer's throat. When fianlly they dragged him off Meyer was half-dead and his assailant only half-satisfied.

In the excitement none noticed Mulcahy slip away. They were still battling to subdue and handcuff the Boss when a shot sounded in the next room.

They found Mulcahy sitting back in a chair with the top of his head blown off.

This supreme tragedy, in what within the last few hours she had begun to regard as a grisly nightmare, took Lila Joyce's courage.

Had there been danger for her to face, she would not have given way; nor had there been danger confronting any one she held dear. That was all past. It was the wrecking of these men's lives, through fault of their own as it might be, and the violent death of Mulcahy as his choice of a way out that unnerved her.

Had Calvin Fouts had any doubt of her complete femininity under the garb of capability that had made her a leader and a fighter, it would have been dispelled then. For with a quick sob she fell on her knees at the side of the cot by which she had stood throughout this climaxing scene and cried unrestrainedly.

Then, too, it seemed to him that it was but meet that he should take the rôle of comforter and protector to the best of his handicapped ability. With awkward but learning hand he patted the dark head bowed on her arm and turned his face to press a kiss on her other hand, which, outstretched, had fallen on his pillow.

She looked up at that. And through the tears he searched for the answer to the great question spoken by his own eyes.

"It's half-past five, commissioner."

For the second time Fouts condemned O'Grady for pulling him back out of the clouds, disturbing the most potent spell he had ever known—the deep, bewildering amber of this woman's eyes.

But O'Grady still found it necessary to think of the grosser things.

"It's half-past five, and reports are starting to come in from the precincts. The cells are filling up."

The commissioner's face drew into harsh lines as he turned from the heaven that Lila Joyce had come to represent, to look upon the other half of the picture spread before him.

The fuming Skillings, already mentally at work to beat the charge against him by means of a conniving prosecutor and a packed jury. The surly gangsters, squirming but malignant at the prospect of going up the river for many years. These had no place in the same room, not in the same world with the radiant purity of the girl.

"Take them away, O'Grady. You will arraign them personally before a Supreme Court Justice—not before a petty judge—and oppose all talk of bail. Wait a moment. Telegraph the governor in my name, and ask that he have the attorney-general appoint a special deputy to take charge of the case. Put off the arraignment until he arrives."

As O'Grady prepared to take Skillings and the gunmen from the room, Fouts' glance switched to the Mayor. Lying rather than sitting in the chair, his suffering and misery touched their hearts. His shoulder and left arm were twitching now in unison with the spasm which kept his face in a constant lop-sided and twisted grin, horrible to see.

Lila's choking plea barely reached Fouts:

"You won't——"

He shook his head. Had the Mayor been in Skillings' place he could not have found it in his heart to throw him into a cell.

"We'll let Bradley go home just now in custody of an officer. He needs medical attention first of all. Later we'll charge him with conspiracy to bring about illegal voting."

"God bless you, Fouts," Bradley quavered. In the hush they heard his teeth chatter. The palsied jaw made his speech thick. "I—I'm through. I quit."

His hands covered the distorted cheek. He smiled with the other half of his face, and the effort was ghastly. "Terrible, isn't it?"

He looked wearily around, and the sympathy in their faces, in the gunmen's, even—in all except Skillings', who showed nothing but black hate and contempt—seemed to help him to go on:

"If I—if I'm elected I'll—resign at once. I'd withdraw now if I could. If I'm not elected"—unconsciously he used the phrase that Mulcahy twice that night had employed, and as he did so his eyes, unhidden, strayed to the closed door behind which Mulcahy's body lay—"if I'm not, why, I'll be glad!"

He swayed feebly as he ended. His hands groped backward for the arm of the chair.

"Come."

O'Grady tapped Skillings' arm. The big, pale-blue eyes measured the distance. He stepped forward, a policeman on either side. A step from the Mayor, he pulled up short. His knee doubled and his foot shot into Bradley's stomach.

Throwing back his head, he laughed aloud, while they drove him on to a cell, never casting a backward glance at the man he had led into crooked politics, ultimately ruined and now kicked aside as something to be despised for showing a spark of strangled manhood.

The doctor who had accompanied Fouts from the hospital arose from an examination of Bradley.

"I'll get the ambulance. That swine has hurt him, and his left side seems to be paralyzed."

Unmoving on the floor, the Mayor's eyes became round in horror, as he realized that the palpitating nerves and muscles which had affected him were stilled, perhaps for ever.

Tom O'Grady halted in confusion. He had returned to report that the newspapers had been notified of Bradley's practical withdrawal from the race; that every cell in the city was packed; that the women, and whosoever wished, were going to the polls unmolested. He found himself stepping into a shrine where, such a short time ago, had been a place of darkness.

"There he is." Fouts smiled and pointed at him. "There's your no-man's soul! I'm going back to the hospital now, O'Grady. You remain in charge. The day should be quiet enough."

"Yes, sir."

The acting commissioner cleared his throat. He wanted to be first to——

Fouts observed his hesitation and raised his brows in encouragement. O'Grady took a hitch on himself. He looked from his chief to Lila and back again a couple of times. He saw their fingers intertwine. That settled him.

"I want—I—I——" he stammered, then blurted: "Oh, hell! I want to congratulate you both!"

Startled, Fouts forgot himself, and drew up on his elbow.

"What the—— Confound you, O'Grady! Can't I do my own proposing? Get out of here!" He settled back as O'Grady stampeded. "Well, what do you think of that?"

The gorgeous blush that mantled Lila Joyce's cheek answered his exclamation. He held out his hands. Hers crept into them, and she knelt again at his bedside. Their faces moved close together.

"You may be no man's man," she whispered, laughing softly, "but——"

"Thank God," he said fervently, "I can no longer say I am no woman's!"

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**"The Queen of the Air" is the title of a fine story, out in our next issue.**


## SPECIAL NOTICE

**Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your semi-monthly copy of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this magazine every two weeks, so they will know how many copies to order from us.**

# THE SEALED CAR

By J. A. TIFFANY

"I CALLED to see you, Mr. Ripley, about your million dollars worth of gold that was stolen. I'm from the Coast Railroad Company. My name is Burton—Dave Burton. There are one or two questions that I would like to ask you."

"Sure. Come in. This is my wife—Mr. Burton, Grace."

The pretty face of the slender little woman lighted with a smile as she acknowledged Burton's bow and relieved him of his hat. Before taking the chair that Ripley indicated, the detective took a comprehensive glance round the living-room, then turned to look out over the bay.

"You have a pleasant place, Mr. Ripley," he remarked.

"Pleasant enough," Ripley agreed. "We rented it when we thought we were rich—or, at any rate, fairly well off. We shall have to seek more modest quarters, unless I recover my gold."

"If there is any loss, it seems to me that it will be the company's, not yours, Mr. Ripley," Burton returned, with a wry smile.

"It ought to be, of course; but a man never can be sure of collecting a claim until he has the money in his hand. But I'm glad to have the assurance of indemnity from the company's claim agent."

"That isn't my line. I'm one of the company's detectives—chief of the department."

"Oh! That's better still. You've found a clue?"

"I have formed some theories, but I don't pretend to have found any clue, as yet. Possibly your answer to a question I want to ask you may eliminate one of my theories, and narrow the case down to the one that I consider most reasonable—namely, that the gold was stolen in transit."

"I hardly see how that could have been possible. It seems to me that the thing must have been done either in Seattle or right here in San Francisco."

"That it was not done in San Francisco I am positive; and it could not have been done in Seattle if your statement of the time at which the car was sealed was correct. Will you please think again, and tell me just what time it was?"

"One way or the other—before or after—it was within five minutes of four o'clock."

"What makes you so sure of that?"

"Because Mrs. Ripley and I had not had our lunch. From the freight yard I went to the State Hotel to meet her, and we just had time to eat something before boarding our train for San Francisco at five o'clock."

"Would you mind telling me the history of the loading of your effects into the car at Seattle, so nearly as you can remember the details?"

"Not a bit. We had two motor-truck loads. The first, with the heavier furniture and the steel chest containing the gold, arrived at the yard about one o'clock; and I superintended its removal from the truck to the freight car. Soon as the truck was empty it went back to the house, where Mrs. Ripley saw to the loading of the remainder of the furniture, the piano, the books, crockery in two barrels, and the pictures in crates.

"It was back at the yard about two o'clock, and just as the last of it was being loaded into the car, your freight agent, Henry Nickerson, came along. Soon as he saw the steel chest, he wanted to know what was in it; and when I told him it was full of gold ingots, he nearly had a fit. I thought he would have dropped dead when, in reply to his further question, I told him the contents of the steel chest were worth a million dollars. He insisted on my taking it out of the car, and shipping it under a different classification.

"'It isn't a question of classification, or rate,' I told him; 'but this chest is going right along with my furniture, or I'll take the whole caboodle away and ship them by water. That would be safest, anyway. I'm not going to have you sending my gold under an armed guard, and so advertising to every crook on the Coast that there's loot aboard worth taking a chance at. I'll pay whatever may be the rate for freight of this kind; and if you seal the car, and say nothing about it to anybody, there won't be any train robbers coming around to take a whack at it.'

"Nickerson scratched his head and looked at me. 'How do I know there's any gold in that box, anyway?' he demanded. I smiled at him, took a bunch of keys out of my pocket, and unfastened the two face locks and the padlock on the steel chest, threw back the lid, and showed him more gold ingots, I imagine, than he ever had seen in all his life."

"Must have been nearly a ton and a half of them," Burton remarked. "I can see Nickerson's face now."

"Yes; at first he was awed, but, next moment, he was looking skeptical again. 'That's all very well,' he said; 'it looks all right; but I don't know now that it's gold.' I offered to call an expert, or to pay the fee of any expert whom he chose to call himself, for the purpose of making the test.

"We agreed on an expert—a jeweler named Joyce; and by the time he had been called and made his tests of a dozen ingots selected at random Nickerson was satisfied that it was gold, but he still haggled about accepting the responsibility of carrying the chest in the freight car. Finally, I won him over, after I had sealed the chest with wax and made the impression of this seal that I carry on my watch-fob.

"After that, the car was locked and sealed, and I handed the keys of the chest to Nickerson. The time then, as I have said already, was four o'clock. But why are you so anxious to establish the time on that particular point?"

"Because Nickerson wrote to us, saying that he wanted to get rid of the responsibility of holding your keys, and he enclosed them in his letter, which he registered. The envelope was post-marked at five o'clock—an hour after you handed him the keys. Therefore, he couldn't have robbed the chest himself, and no one could have got the keys away from him and had them long enough to do the job."

"But the man who did this job didn't have the keys, either, according to your theory."

"No; but he had something which Nickerson had not: He had time—time to plan and plot and work. You see, the train to which your car was attached left Seattle that day at six o'clock. It is altogether impossible that the robbery was done in Seattle."

"Then, your other theory holds good?'

"Yes."

"And that is——?"

"First, let me ask you another question, Mr. Ripley. Why were you so insistent on your gold being shipped in a certain way and no other—why was it necessary that it should travel in company with your furniture?"

"When I tell you, probably you'll laugh at me; but I can't help that. I had a reason, which to me seemed good—imperative. You may call it sentiment, superstition—what you will; but I'm not ashamed of it. You see, Mr. Burton, except for one or two fairly good paintings and a few rare books, I have nothing of value in this bungalow. The furniture is old; but every piece is an old friend. When I got back from Alaska a month ago, and walked into the little home that Grace had been keeping warm for me, after I had kissed and hugged her, I felt like kissing that old sideboard, or buffet, doing a turkey-trot with that mission pedestal, and embracing the decrepit arm-chair that stands in the corner there.

"Grace and I talked about buying new furniture for our home here—selling off all this stuff to a broker in Seattle; but we agreed that we couldn't do it. These are the things that we first had when we went to housekeeping fifteen years ago. Every piece of furniture that you see was bought with money that I saved out of a salary of twenty dollars a week.

"That little woman, Mr. Burton, is my goddess; but these things around me are my household gods. And the gold—if I had toiled to save the money to buy these poor things, what had I done—what had I *not* done—for the gold? I had wrought and labored, with aching back and bleeding hands; under broiling sun and in biting cold, heart-sick, weary, despairing, I had fought on alone for years; and if Grace were my goddess and these things my gods, then the gold was my god—very god of very god.

"Chattels, and wife and gold—these were my trinity, the trinity that I worshipped, Mr. Burton; and I couldn't bear the idea of their being separated any more than was necessary. You may think this foolish, sir; but something of folly, of sentiment, perhaps, may be permitted to a man who for ten years has sojourned in the valley of fear, for eight years has wallowed in the slough of despond."

"I think I understand you, Mr. Ripley," Burton remarked, in a subdued tone. "Just now, you were asking about my other theory. I think I said at the outset that, if the gold was not stolen in Seattle, then it must have been stolen in transit."

"Yes; but how—how? That's what gets me."

"That is what I have to find out."

"Well, of course, I hope you will succeed; but it seems to me that you are setting out on a blind trail. The chest was here in Seattle in the custody of your company, from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning. Are you sure that it was not tampered with in that time?"

"Absolutely. It was in the vault; and day and night men were on guard with loaded rifles."

"But how, in the name of all that's mysterious, could any one have broken into that sealed car while it was in transit, opened the steel chest, taken out the gold, replaced it with the same weight in lead, locked the chest up again, sealed it with my seal, made away with the gold, and sealed up the freight car on leaving it?"

"As I have said, Mr. Ripley, that is for me to find out."

"But you have a theory, you said," Ripley persisted. "Pardon my apparent tenacity; but, naturally, I am deeply interested in the recovery of my gold."

"My theory is that this was one of Red Ragan's jobs."

"Who is he?"

"Pardon me; I spoke of him as if you would know him, like every one else does; but you have been away ten years, and he is one of the newer generation of crooks—a fellow of twenty-five years, short, slim, wiry; ingenious in his devices and absolutely reckless in their execution; seems to value his own life lightly as he values the life of any one who runs counter to his plots."

"But how did he work the scheme? My arrival in Seattle was known only to my wife and one or two trusted friends; my possession of a large quantity of gold was known to fewer still. To plan and execute this thing a man must have had time."

"When you left Juneau, Mr. Ripley, there is no doubt in my mind that you were watched and dogged, and when you arrived in Seattle that fact soon was known to every crook on the Coast. Red Ragan scented loot. Between the time you packed your first load on the car and the arrival of the second load, he secreted himself in the car."

"Impossible. I never left the car a moment from the time the motor-truck arrived until the seal was set on the car at four o'clock in the afternoon."

"But men were passing in and out of the car all the time—carrying your furniture and other effects. He might have disguised himself as a porter and carried in a crate or a box; then secreted himself behind a barrel. I find two barrels of crockery on your list."

"Yes; but granting all you imagine, how did he carry in a ton and a half of lead? After he had carried it in, how did he get the ton and a half of gold out of the car, and where did he take it, after he had got it out?"

"I find two of the floor boards in the car have been disturbed. While Red Ragan was in the car when it started a confederate was concealed under the car—riding on the truck, or slung there in some precarious fashion. With a monkey-wrench, he loosened bolts under the car, and, that accomplished, Red pried up the boards, pulled in his assistant, and the two of them worked at their leisure. Locks and keys are child's play for Ragan."

"But the seal—my seal. How did he replace that, after he had broken it?"

"Simply enough. Before breaking it, he made a plaster-of-paris cast of the impression, which he used to duplicate the seal later."

"But the lead? What was the idea? Was it a grim, sardonic joke—inspired by a perverted sense of humor? After a man had made sure of his booty, sure of his getaway, why should he undertake such a work of supererogation as filling up the chest with lead?"

"The motive was the same as that which prompted him to re-lock and re-seal the chest: He knew that the freight was due to arrive in San Francisco after noon on Saturday; he figured that, probably, the chest would not be opened until Monday, at the Mint. Therefore, if the chest were seemingly intact on reaching San Francisco, he would have two days' more start to hide or dispose of his plunder."

"This is really wonderful, Mr. Burton. And have you formed any opinion as to the locality in which the men got the gold out of the car?"

"Yes; they did that at Eugene, in Oregon."

"Marvelous! You surprise me. One would think that instead of deduction, all this was a matter of exact knowledge with you."

"I know my man; I know Red. The train reached Eugene in the night. It had a stop there of two hours—to change engines, detach two cars and take on three others. While it was standing on the siding to allow the San Francisco Limited to pass, Red and his man were busy throwing out the gold, while others were carrying it down the embankment to a waiting truck or touring car. I think when I leave the city this afternoon I shall have little difficulty in going straight to the spot where the gold

is cached, or such of it as has not been disposed of; and they cannot have sold much of it, yet."

"Your reasoning is most convincing, and the case that you make out seems complete, except for one thing: you have not yet explained how these men got three thousand pounds of lead into the car to substitute for the gold that they stole."

"Probably carried it in sacks or boxes, by your own moving men, in Red's pay."

"But we should have seen the extra packages. Every one of mine was counted."

"Have you unpacked everything, and found it just as you expected—those barrels of china, for instance?"

"Everything but those."

"Where are they?"

"On the back veranda."

"Let us go and look at them. While I am here I may as well assure myself that no possible clue has been overlooked."

The heads of the two barrels were removed quickly, and Ripley showed the excelsior and the top layers of crockery undisturbed.

"Disposes of that theory," the miner remarked.

"Let us make sure, by emptying the barrels."

Ripley unpacked one while Burton took out the contents of the other; but they found nothing to reward their labors.

"It's pretty warm work, Burton," Ripley remarked, as they returned to the living-room. "Will you join me in a cold drink? You smoke?"

"Yes, to both questions. I thank you."

"Hello, Grace! What are you doing?" Ripley asked his wife.

"Trying to get these horrid screws out of the piano-box. You promised to open it up for me yesterday, and you haven't done it. You don't know how lonely I am without my piano. It's a week since I touched it."

"Give me the screw-driver, old girl, and go and mix Mr. Burton and me a nice cold drink."

"Where do I come in?" Mrs. Ripley demanded, with a pout.

"Pretty early in the day for you, old lady. Better stick to the pump."

Burton watched Ripley as he fumbled with the screw-driver. When Mrs. Ripley came back with a tray, the miner laid the screw-driver down, saying, with a sigh:

"I guess those screws are clinched on the other side. I give it up."

"Let me try," Burton offered, rising and picking up the screw-driver.

"Couldn't think of it," Ripley protested, holding out his hand for the screw-driver; but Burton already was at work on a screw, and he found it turned remarkably easily.

"Please, don't, Mr. Burton," Mrs. Ripley begged, with an earnestness that Burton noted. "I was only joking. Often I don't touch my piano for weeks at a time."

"I'll have these screws out in no time," the detective answered, smiling.

"Give me that screw-driver, Burton," Ripley demanded, in a tone abrupt as his words.

"I'm going to open this box, Mr. Ripley," the detective retorted, unruffled.

"Oh, very well," Ripley assented, sourly, as he sat down and began sipping his drink, while Grace stood at the window, nervously tapping on a pane.

At the end of five minutes Burton lifted out the back of the piano-box, and he gave a low whistle, then looked embarrassed.

"What do you find?" Ripley asked, blowing a cloud of smoke to the ceiling.

"A piano," the detective promptly said.

"Did you suppose you were going to find your friend Red Ragan in that box—or his footprints?"

"No," Burton answered, sheepishly; "but in a case of this kind I should not be doing my duty if I went away leaving any possibility untried. And now that the box is open, if you'll give me a hand, we'll get the piano out so that Mrs. Ripley can play on it. Perhaps she will give us a tune before I go."

After the two men had swung the piano back to the wall near the north window, Burton, in an absent sort of way, raised the top.

"Still looking for Ragan?" Ripley inquired, with a laugh. "I'm glad of your company, Burton; but I should think you would be wanting to start North after Red Ragan."

"I have the wires busy; and I couldn't leave, anyway, until three o'clock. Was this piano one of the things that you bought when you were married, Mr. Ripley?"

"Oh, no. We couldn't afford it then. Grace has had it only about two years—since I began to show color to my backers."

"You were not working only for yourself, then, up in Alaska?"

"No. Four of my friends—best fellows west of the Rockies—grub-staked me all through—for seven years: Fred Giles, Tom Rawlins, Jack Kershaw and Walter Briggs. You know them?"

"Yes; everybody knows them, more or less; and it's my business to know everybody. Were they interested equally with yourself?"

"Yes; my share in the stolen gold was to have been two hundred thousand dollars. So, you see, I am, at best, a long way from being a millionaire."

"Yes; I see," Burton replied, thoughtfully.

"What shall I play you?" Mrs. Ripley inquired; and without waiting for an answer she dashed off into one of the newer waltzes. Then, in a voice rather thin, but sweet withal and sympathetic, to her own accompaniment, she sang an old Scotch song, with the haunting refrain:

> "Y' little know how well you're loved;
> Will y' no' come back agen?"

After leaving the Ripley bungalow, Mr. Burton shut himself up in his office at the station, where he saw three of his assistants during the afternoon, and despatched them on various errands, seemingly unrelated to each other or to the gold robbery which was uppermost in the minds of all railroad men. Burton also sent and received many telegrams.

He had a light lunch brought in to him in the middle of the afternoon; and it was midnight before he left for home. There, he slept on a lounge in the living-room; and at six o'clock he was up again, talking with a seedy, furtive-looking youth of twenty, whom he called "Craws."

"That's all I want to know," Burton said, at the end of two minutes. "Here's a half-eagle for you. Now, get along out of here."

"This all I get, for taking a chance like that?"

"You've taken bigger chances for a good deal less, many's the time," Burton retorted.

At eight o'clock Mr. Burton left the house, to which he returned at intervals during the day to change his disguise. He did not go near the office at all, but telegrams were brought to him by his assistants at cafes in various parts of the city. But the actual time that he spent in these places was short, and it was not until after ten o'clock at night that he drank any liquor.

Two hours later, however, he was staggering along Bayview Crescent, talking to himself, and laughing boister-

ously at his own wit or humor. "Tha'sh good un, Dave. "Funny—devilish funny, old fell'," he chuckled.

Halfway along the crescent he stopped to apostrophize an array of ash-cans, barrels of excelsior and boxes of rubbish.

"Shay, wha' you doin' out this time night?" he hiccoughed. "Better run along home. Ah!—would you, you rascal? Trip me up, eh?" and, with a mocking laugh, Mr. Burton saved himself from falling by sticking his cane into the middle of one of the ash-cans.

"Here! What're you after?" a man demanded, coming from the rear of the house with a box, on wheels. "Why—Burton!"

"'Lo, Ripley; that you?"

"Yes, I didn't expect to see you here. I supposed that you were up in Eugene."

"'S all off. Got canned yesterday—got pickled first—then canned. How's that?"

"Then you're not working on any case?"

"No. Blackman's got it. Blackman don't know shingle thing. After he's mussed it all up, and given Red a good start, they'll send for me to come back."

"Well, I hope they'll hurry up. Sorry it's so late, or I'd ask you in to have a drink."

"No; 'nuff'sh good 'sh feasht, ol' top. Guess I'll roll along home. Shee you—— Beg pardon," Burton mumbled, as he lurched and collided with a passerby, just as another man came from the rear of Ripley's bungalow, trundling an ash-can.

"Well, why don't you look where you're going, you drunken fool?" the stranger growled.

"Shay that 'gain, an' I'll make you repeat it," Burton declared, with drunken solemnity.

"I've a good mind to wipe the sidewalk with you, you——"

"Here, don't be starting anything at this time of night," the man who had brought out the ash-can begged the newcomer, as he laid his hand on his arm and tried to lead him away from Burton. At the same time, Ripley took Burton's arm, and started with him in the opposite direction.

Ripley and his helper uttered exclamations simultaneously. Each found himself handcuffed; and before they had time to express their indignation or surprise, a touring car drew up before the bungalow, four men jumped out, and, with revolvers pointed at their heads, Ripley and the other man were forced into the car.

"I leave you in charge, Weidau," Burton said to one of the men. "The four of you stay here, and when the wagon comes, load it up and bring the stuff to headquarters. Search the cellar to see if there's any of it left there. Go, ahead, Tom."

"What's the idea, Burton?" Ripley demanded.

"Yes, put us wise," his companion growled.

"I guess you're wise—after your kind—Gentleman Frank. I know all about that little tour of yours in a sixty-horsepower car to Los Angeles, and also how you came back from an entirely different direction—Seattle—in a piano-box."

"I don't know what you are getting at, Burton," Ripley protested; "but before we go any further I wish you would explain by what authority or on what pretext you are abducting me and 'Gentleman Frank,' as you call him."

"Oh, the game's up, Ripley. You can't bluff it through any further."

"I infer that you accuse Frank of hiding in my piano-box and secreting the missing gold in it; also of putting a load of lead into the steel chest. Naturally, you implicate me, as having knowledge of the deal. Granting, for the sake of argument, that your suspicions are correct, where's the harm? I didn't steal anything. A man can't steal his own property. It even has been held that he can't steal the property of a firm, partnership or club of which he is a member."

"I'm not accusing you of stealing anything, Ripley. All that you will be charged with is conspiracy to defraud the Coast Railroad Company of a million dollars by this little conjuring trick with a wagonload of gold and another of lead."

"Um. That's different. Say, what was the idea of giving me all that bunk about Red Ragan? Frank tells me that there isn't any such crook."

"Impossible to prove a negative, Ripley; though I confess I never heard of him myself, until I told you about him yesterday."

"Then what did you want up at my house yesterday?"

"The one and only thing I wanted was the name and number of the piano that I knew you would have provided to give color to your story. When your furniture arrived at the bungalow, the piano-box contained Gentleman Frank and the missing gold; but, inside of an hour, I have no doubt, the gold was down in the cellar, and the piano—Wingate, 2198—was screwed up in the box, waiting to be opened at the most effective time.

"After I had the name and the number, it was an easy thing to find out where and when it was bought. One of your confederates got it at Dobson & Strong's ten days ago, and took it away in a truck, so that there should be no record of the address to which it went. He gave the name of Brooks, and said he lived in Oakland.

"Further than that, I have a telegram from Seattle, with the information that Mrs. Ripley's maid says there never was a piano in the house during the last six months—the time that she had lived with Mrs. Ripley."

"This is all very interesting; but how do you connect Frank with it?"

"He left here two weeks ago, announcing that he was going to Los Angeles. Instead of that, he went to Seattle; and while he laid low, fairly successfully, he didn't keep close enough to avoid observation altogether. The police there know him. Being curious as to his purpose in the city, they shadowed him, and he was seen to enter your house; but, though they watched closely, they never saw him come out. He came out in a box."

"Oh, very well. Have it your own way, Burton. I have nothing to say. My lawyer will do the talking."

"And the less talking he does, the better it will be for you, Ripley. I have this case fastened on you so that you can't wiggle out; and your only hope is to throw yourself on the mercy of the court.

"The trouble with your scheme, Ripley, was not the mistakes that you made, but the mistakes you didn't make. Your plan was too perfect. You anticipated everything, and had the answer ready. The very completeness of your preparations constituted your greatest weakness.

"Putting the lead into the chest and sealing it up again could only suggest one thing—that it was done to gain time. The time between Saturday noon and Monday morning was needed to get your things—your furniture and the piano-box—away from the freight house. If it had been apparent when the car was opened that it had been rifled, then your other belongings would have been detained, and searched, and instead of Frank getting to your house in the piano-box he would have been jerked out of it at the station."

"I see you've got it all doped out, Burton."

"Sure. The thing was obvious. I suppose you have been enjoying the reading of all these newspaper stories about the inscrutable mystery of the disappearance of a million dollars worth of gold, and patting yourself on the back as the cleverest little sleight-of-hand man that ever came over

the pike, eh, Ripley? Pshaw, man! There never was any mystery in it for me. I wouldn't even dignify it with the name of 'problem.' It was just a minor enigma in amateur crime—neat and all that, but 'inscrutable'? Bah!"

"That's right, Burton; rub it in. But, I say, old man, you're not going to try and rope my wife into this thing, are you? It's pretty tough on me, you know, after I've starved and grubbed and bled and groaned for ten years to get the stuff, to think I may have to go through another ten years of torture in jail; but I can stand it, all right, if I know that Grace isn't going to be dragged into it. She doesn't know the first thing about this plant, Burton—honest, she doesn't. She thinks you are the smoothest little detector on top o' the earth, and she's looking forward to your catching that guy, Red Ragan, that you were telling us about. Grace never knew at any stage of the game that there wasn't a piano in that box, or that there was anything else in it."

"You lie like thunder, Ripley, but I admire you and respect you for it. Under any circumstances, if Mrs. Ripley should set up the defence that she was acting under your orders, I don't think they could convict her. But if you make a full confession of your own part in the business, and go on the stand and swear that Mrs. Ripley knew nothing about the scheme, they certainly can't do anything with her."

"Thanks, old man. I'll own up to the conspiracy—to arson and manslaughter, too, if you like—in order to save Grace."

"She's worth it, Ripley, I believe. Seems to me that your solicitude about saving Grace is your only saving grace."

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**Don't miss "A Night at the Countess' Club," in No. 24, issued November 1st.**

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# INSECTS FIRST TO USE LIQUID FIRE

OBSERVERS of the ceaseless strife that prevails in the insect world have found that these tiny creatures made use through untold ages of weapons which man has only succeeded in developing during the present war. Ants spray their enemies with a burning poison, it is said, in the same way as liquid fire is now sprayed upon the enemy. And a little beetle, called the brachins crepitans, defends itself with a smoke bomb. When attacked it emits a liquid which bursts into flame on coming into contact with the air, causing a poisonous and irritating vapor. Over any pond in summer aeroplane battles may be seen, while all insects are masters of camouflage.

Most of these weapons are employed in slaying for food, but later observers have found that the ant is quite as remarkable for its military qualities as for the industry noted by Solomon. Whole colonies of these little creatures march to war against a neighboring nest, and on a battlefield that a handkerchief would cover terrific struggles take place. No quarter is asked or given; defeat means slavery or death. The ant is the model worker, but he lives under iron military discipline.

Raids are planned when the supply of workers runs short. Scouts are sent on in advance to spy out the land, and then the army is ordered forward. No time is wasted in preparation, for each fighter has his weapons always at hand. The attack does not begin until the entire force is in position and the enemy stronghold is surrounded. Out swarm the besieged, many with their young in their mouths in an effort to break through the advancing line. Often this fails and then the struggle begins.

The burning poison is brought into play, but the chief weapon of the ant is his mandibles. With these a fatal wound may be delivered or a slighter one inflicted, into which poison is injected. Some smear their enemies with a thick, ill-smelling liquid. When the battle is over the victors depart, each bearing a wounded enemy or a cocoon. Many of the cocoons are eaten, but from the others the young are hatched and forced into slavery. One ancient writer even asserts that the victors bury their own dead, but leave the enemy slain lying on the field.

This is much the same to-day with the human race.

This predatory instinct has been taken advantage of by melon-growers of California in fighting a destructive scale which threatened their crops. Every insect has its special enemy, and a species of beetle is the deadly foe of this scale. Huge numbers of these little insects are gathered in the Sierras during the winter, their hibernating season, and carefully stored until spring, when they are distributed throughout the melon fields to protect them against the enemy.

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## TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

No.
1 THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, by Dr. H. Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, by Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE TELLER'S SECRET, by Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, by Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, by William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS, By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, by Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, by Robt. C. Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, By Charles F. Oursler
13 UNDER A MASK, by Critenden Marriott
14 CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall
15 AFTER A MILLION, by Police Captain Howard
16 SHADOWING THE BLUE TRIANGLE, By Charles F. Oursler
17 THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FORTESQUE, By Redfield Ingalls
18 THE BIRD-HEADED SPHINX, by Edith S. Tupper
19 A DOUBLE MYSTERY, by Dr. Harry Enton
20 THE MAGICIAN DETECTIVE, by C. F. Oursler
21 KING COBRA MYSTERY, by George Gilbert
22 THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS, by Wm. H. Osborne

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**FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York.**

# FIFTY CHIPS APIECE

By F. R. FAST, L.L.B.

FARO FLAT, the gold camp on the eastern slope of the Sierras in California, might just as well have been Keno Bend, or Poker Hill, or Seven-up Gulch as far as I could see, for the houses dotted a very uneven surface of land, mostly hillside and gully, and the male population played at all the card games known to the sporting world.

There were precious few "gilded palaces of sin," although gold was plentiful, but there was a systematic uniformity in the frequency of the ungilded saloons, nearly every other place having its bar and bottles. In all of these the paraphernalia for gambling was abundant, for not very much is needed where the players are "dead game."

An attempt at a main street had been made by the grouping of the business buildings, and on either side of this thoroughfare were the scattered domiciles of the denizens. On the adjacent and surrounding hills, in any direction, were bluish and grayish and brownish excrescences, generally pyramidal in shape, and all indicating mining tunnels, shafts or inclines of varying depth and crookedness, of which, indeed, the mounds were the "dumps." These holes in the mountain were mines, regularly worked, or were merely "prospects," according as the digging had developed a vein of "pay dirt," or had discovered the "pinching out" of the lead.

Several valuable properties were within pistol shot of the store in Faro Flat. The big "Inferno" was one such mine, and the hoisting works that loomed above it looked business-like and important. Around the foothill, to the South, and up the Roan Horse Ravine, was the "Three Sisters," a claim from which the gold came almost pure and free from rock. It was one of the very few mines which paid no royalty to the great "Diego" quartz mill that roared night and day a mile down the Nevada road, where the river made two winding green ribbons of verdure in the gray of the sagebrush.

I well remember the first time I saw the owners of the "Three Sisters." They were young fellows, hardly thirty, yet bearded and bronzed until they only could have said how old, in fact, they were. It was night and they were both in the "Saints' Rest" saloon, at the faro layout of "Green-eyed Charley." Young Frank, whose face was exceedingly white, in contrast with the almost blue-black of his beard and hair, was playing at the game. He was losing, too, and the cappers for the gambler, who dealt, shot angry glances at the miner's partner, who stood there, quietly urging Frank to cease and to accompany him back to their cabin. A feverish glint was in the eyes of the player, for he had seen a gleaming pile of gold coin melt away before that silent and inexorable box wherefrom the slender fingers of Charley deftly extracted the fatal-seeming cards. He arose, however, at last, apparently reluctant to go, yet more than a little constrained by the influence which his partner, Rollin, exerted upon him. I noted Rollin particularly. His brow was large, with bumps indicative of force, perception and intellectuality, while his calm bluish eyes were halfway given to laughing and were halfway tender, appealing and sad. He was broad of shoulder, thick of chest, and large of limb, looking under his real height because of his heavy build. And his hand, as he passed it around the arm of his friend, was large and strong, but also soft and gentle.

As the two stepped from the door I glanced at the long-fingered gambler. His eyes were blazing a menace to the man who had led the victim away, but he dropped his heavy lids instantly, and not another sign of a single emotion disturbed the utterly immobile and stone-like face.

Saints' Rest seldom attracted me, but having heard that Horace Frank was almost a nightly loser in the place, I determined to go again to see him and to get, perhaps, a glimpse of the fine face of his partner. He was not in his usual haunt that night, and I hunted no further for him. To "change his luck," he was playing at another place called the "Long Tom." When his losses were far more than usually heavy, and he, in consequence, was nearly intoxicated by the drinks he had ordered and gulped down, in desperation, a bitter and painful scene was enacted between himself and Rollin. The latter, having found him there, had tried every look and tone of persuasion upon him in vain. At length he leaned over and whispered:

"What would the sisters think?"

It was like a dash of kerosene on livid coals. Frank leaped to his feet, hot with anger and shame.

"You taunt me beyond endurance!" he screamed; "you miserable, fawning coward! Why can't you let me play? Let me alone! You're always meddling and interfering as if I were a baby! I'm sick of the power you try to exercise, and I mean to—No, no!—Get out!—I say—let go—Take your hand off!—there, take that!" and he fetched his friend a stinging and resounding slap across the cheek in his mad fury.

Like a mother smitten by her own child, Rollin stood. His arms dropped at his sides, his face crimsoned with mortification for his partner, and his eyes were as windows through which his wounded soul could be seen, as he slowly and sorrowfully turned the other side of his face and awaited the second blow. It never fell. Horace had actually raised his hand again, goaded by the consciousness of his own cowardice; but, as a rill is merged in a torrent, his anger was lost in the tumultuous flood of remorse that surged upon him.

"Oh, Harry," he wailed, "take me home—take me home!" and he leaned convulsively against the unswaying shoulder of his friend. Together the two went, the weak man supported by the strong one, who had not yet trusted himself to speak a word.

The morning after that night brought news that I shall always hear retold. Horace Frank was found dead in his bunk, stabbed in the back, and the blade still sheathed to the hilt in his heart. What made it worse was that the knife was the one that Harry Rollin usually carried, and Harry himself was found at the "Three Sisters" tunnel, busily sacking a heap of gold-bearing rock, recently blasted from a rich and dross-surrounded "pocket."

Only a few murders, those of which the attendant circumstances were either eccentric, romantic or peculiarly atrocious, attracted more than a passing notice in Faro Flat. There was no particular novelty in the violent ending of a man's life. But because of the relationship existing between Horace Frank and his partner as well as be-

cause of the joint ownership of the paying gold mine, and the most extraordinary scene enacted in the Long Tom saloon, this crime commanded a camp-wide interest at once.

Rollin was arrested in the act of padlocking the door of the mine.

"What for?" he asked.

"Killin' yur pard," said the sheriff.

"Horace—dead!" gasped the man. "Horace—no—no—what do you—let me go to him!" and a pallor spread over his countenance like a sheet of ice spreads over a freezing pond.

"Yur goin' to the cooler," said his captor, pointing a huge pistol in his face, "an' no parlyfyin'."

"Oh, my God! my little Horace!" was all that the prisoner added; then with his hand supporting his cheek, his eyes listlessly gazing upon the ground, he went with the officer, walking dreamily, like a person without a brain. And all of these "actions" were construed as evidence of his guilt.

The dead man was hardly cold, the cabin was certainly not cleared of the atmosphere of the coroner and his followers, when the case came on. And I and eleven other citizens who had seen no part of the row in the Long Tom and who knew nothing in particular of what had followed, were speedily impaneled on the jury to try the miner for his life. By the mystic ordinances of Fate, or by the malicious machinations of man, the gambler, Green-eyed Charley, was also one of the twelve.

How fearfully the circumstances wove their net about Henry Rollin! He had to admit that Frank had gambled away nearly the whole net output of the mine; that he had quarreled with him repeatedly over it; that he was anxious to make a "clean up" and get away; that he had been so angry that he dared not speak, when his partner's hand had dealt him the blow; that he had gone forth alone to the "Three Sisters" to gather and sack the gold, and that the blood-clotted knife was the one he usually carried.

His own tale was hardly more than a constant and unvarying protestation of his innocence and of his love for his friend. He had left his partner sleeping, he said, early that morning, and had gone to the tunnel before his breakfast—as he frequently did—expecting to work a while and then to return and find Horace up and the morning meal cooked and awaiting his advent. They lived apart from the townspeople and other miners; no one knew of their habits; no one could corroborate a single thing that he said.

Throughout the trial he sat in a dazed, hopeless way, that, in the eyes of not a few, was exceedingly unfavorable to his cause, for they interpreted wildly. And the scene in the Long Tom, where he had taken the blow and not struck back, rehearsed by a dozen men, who were eager to testify, left a fatal impression on many. What a man was this, they argued, who would let the right moment go, when he had a good excuse, and take his victim home to strike his life out as he slept? But yet, in spite of all, I believed from the very first that Rollin was innocent. Others, too, of the jury were more than half persuaded that he told the truth. But when I looked at the bloodless, stony face of Green-eyed Charley, my heart sank.

The hearing was speedily over. We of the jury filed slowly into a rude chamber furnished with chairs and a table. On a shelf were a few pipes, a photograph of an actress, a lamp, a deck of the common mining camp cards and several stacks of red, blue and white chips. The place was not always used for juries.

Of the first wrangle that followed I say nothing. It is enough that I soon found myself the champion of the prisoner, exhorting my comrades to acquit him, while, as I had feared, the gambler was fanatically and doggedly determined that Rollin was guilty of murder in the first degree. He coldly and incisively arrayed the accusing facts before the others who sat with us to free or to condemn our fellow man.

At the end of the first half-hour six of us would have acquitted the miner, and six would have sent him straight to the gallows. An hour later the situation was unchanged, and so it was when three hours had gone and our tongues were thick and weary with talking.

Green-eyed Charley arose at last and went to the shelf whereon lay the cards and chips. Fetching these, he said:

"Come, there is only one way to settle it. We are six to six. You," addressing me, "representing the verdict to acquit, have only to play me, representing the six for conviction, a couple of deals with the pasteboards to decide the whole business. If I lose he goes free, if you lose he hangs. Is it agreeable, gentlemen?"

I was about to reply indignantly that it was not at all agreeable, but almost with one accord the others, whose deepest instincts were thus appealed to, hastened to say that it was "fair 'nough," "jist the thing," "a good idee." They were jaded with the long discussion, wild to be done with the matter and impatient to get away. My protest was utterly lost.

"But I know very little——" I started to say.

"You know poker; everybody knows poker," and the gambler sat down at the table.

My heart revolted at the idea of deciding such a terrible question in such an utterly soulless way.

"No!" I cried; "I can't do it!"

"Oh, such a sop!" said the gambler, quietly.

"Brace up!"

"What yer slumpin' fur?"

"Git in line!"

These and other expressions from my own followers, who might go bodily over to the "guilty" side, left me quite defenseless.

"But I think him innocent!" I blurted, desperately, as if I had not said so a hundred times before.

"Well, we can't fool around all night," said one of my six supporters, "an' ye don't want to disagree the jury, so git in an' settle it. If he's innercent, you'll prob'ly win."

There was no way out of it. With my heart way up in my throat, I sat to play. Fifty chips apiece were piled in front of each, and I mixed the cards with trembling hands. Lazily lighting a cigarette, my opponent calmly looked at the corners of his cards without taking them up, and "kicked" five chips up with his long white finger. A pair of sixes I found in my hand. With a thumping heart I lifted five red chips and placed them against his own. Five giant drops of blood they seemed. It was awful!

The gambler indifferently lifted three of his cards to throw them aside. A like number I slowly and fearfully discarded. Every act seemed so horribly vital!

"Five beans more," said the calm man opposite, upon looking upon the new cards dealt. I had missed my sixes, drawing king, tray and four-spot. It was nothing to bet on—that little pair—yet, as if of some volition other than my own, I called him.

"Sixes," said he, and a pang went through me.

"Sixes here," I answered, huskily.

"King up."

My hair felt as if it would stand.

"King here."

"Four of clubs."

"Four of diamonds," I breathed, awed at the fearful fatality of the pieces of cardboard.

"Deuce of spades."

"Trey of hearts!" God! I nearly died of the tumult in my breast and brain, begotten of this mystic similarity of our hands and the narrow margin by which a heart had won the first pot of blood chips.

He dealt as nonchalantly as if he were passing crackers and cheese across the board, taking a deep inhalation from his cigarette before he deigned to glance at his cards.

A pair of sevens, one a heart, loomed among my five. I believed it to be something beyond my ken—that Fate was in it.

Five chips before the draw and five after it, again we bet. And a pair of fives he held against me at the call. What a leap of my blood I felt! He was going backward, I was going forward, his pairs were becoming smaller, mine were becoming larger! My brain was almost bursting with the pressure. "I shall win!" I thought.

With fumbling fingers I shuffled and dealt again. His pile of chips was reduced by twenty, yet he moved no nervous muscle, nor did a drop of blood arise above his throat to color that chiseled-plaster face. At his cards he gazed dreamily, and then, with an inscrutable air, advanced ten chips of his thirty. I felt an inward shiver.

A pair of eights—one again a heart—I held. It made me frantic! I was unpossessed of myself. Hastily I moved to cover his bet—but paused. My courage was gone. The size of his wager had affected me. Ten chips! Did I dare to risk them on so small a holding? With a doubtful, sinking feeling I pushed them up, and dealt for the draw—three cards to each of us again.

He made his first half-quick movement in putting ten more chips to the front. Reluctantly—almost mechanically—I covered them, but forgot utterly to call as I had thoroughly intended to do. Instantly his long fingers embraced his remaining chips, ten in number, and he planked them down. Not a sign in his face as I hurriedly scanned it. Oh, to possess a nerve like his! Perhaps I had him done for—the verdict won—Rollin free! But a veil was on my brain, a doubt was in my heart. The men about us leaned forward and hardly breathed. I hesitated—if he took the pile, we should still be even. Once, twice, I tried to move my ten forward. I could not—the "gamy" spirit was not in my playing. I threw down the hand.

Coolly sweeping the stakes to his side, he dropped his cards. They slid from the table, falling at my side, and I stooped to gather them up, seeing as I did so a pair of fours only among them. The thing was a shock. The strange fatality had continued. I had held the whole situation in my hand, but he had bluffed me out. Oh, I had been a coward! Anguish, shame, remorse came over me—yea, and rage, for thus to bluff the life of a man away seemed positively hideous to me.

Sneeringly, I thought, the gambler assembled the cards. While reaching then for his cigarette, he knocked the deck into his lap, but recovering from the seeming awkwardness, he shuffled and dealt with astounding and puzzling dexterity.

My feelings at finding three sevens in my hand can hardly be imagined. It was almost as if Fate assured me anew. Recklessly I pushed up fifteen chips, and then withdrew five, fearing he would be suspicious, and would bet not at all if I went in so confidently. He came in at once, however. The draw brought me nothing of value. Ten chips again I shoved to the front. He saw the pile and raised it five. I stayed, though with a quickening breath. Half of our chips were in. His cigarette came slowly up for a long pull; then, with an air that was diabolically deliberate, he pushed the remainder of his chips to the pile. The whole game—the verdict—life or death was in the movement. A shudder, half of involuntary admiration for the man's coolness, went electrically over me. The perspiration poured from my forehead; my hands shook, and were cold. This time I would not falter. I swear I thought he was bluffing again, and that very Heaven was with me, and I pushed my pile against his own.

"What have you got?" I demanded in shaking tones, glaring across at him.

As if to exasperate me to the very verge of murder, he puffed again at his sickening smoke, and slowly turned his cards and spread them.

I reeled away with a cry.

Three kings were on the table before him!

There was utter silence for a moment.

"Settled," said one of my followers, then, and all the others chimed in, some mournfully, I thought. The thing was done. Destiny had wrought it, I said to myself.

The gambler became our foreman, and back to the courtroom we went. I shall never forget the shame and disgrace that I felt upon looking again into the questioning eyes of Harry Rollin. More than ever I believed him guiltless. And it seemed that I had personally sent him to death on the gallows.

They led him away to a cell. On the morrow he would hang, for delay was not in vogue in Faro Flat.

That night I wandered forth like a thing bereft of sense and rest, sinking at last on a patch of dried grass, up in a small ravine, above the town, there to look up into the marvelous sky and try to solve the problem of man's existence.

I must have lain some time, unconscious of the flight of the hours. Suddenly the earth, so near to my ears, warned me of the near approach of something that walked heavily. I sat up. Voices sounded through the still air, and though the speakers were several rods distant I caught the words.

"This place is good 'nough fur anybody," said one.

"Patch of grass just ahead," another voice announced.

I was all alive in an instant, for the last voice was that of Green-eyed Charley. With a noiseless "frog leap" I reached the cover of a thick growth of sagebrush, and lay there panting with excitement and listening intently. On the very grass where I had been they squatted. I recognized the other as a "Doc" Fadden who had been upon the jury—and not one of the six that had stood a time with me.

"That was a turrible bluff yuh come on 'um," said Fadden.

"Good as a royal flush when you play with a coward," the gambler rejoined.

"If they'd a-saw you a-jugglin' the deck under the table, an' ringin' in a new one, yer game 'ud a-been a bad un."

"You're a d—n fool. They never see anything. It was a desperate move, for I had to win."

"S'posen ye hadn't, what then?"

"We should have had to do for Rollin, too."

"Ye mean you—not we—ye did the stickin' yerself, mind that!"

"Shut up! You're in for it as much as I am now. You're accessory, understand?"

"Oh, I onderstand, but ye did the stabbin', all the same."

"Well, how else could we get the mine, you fool?"

"I ain't sayin' nuthin' agin yur way. But what's the idee now? How'll ye manage?"

"Didn't I say," said the gambler, a little hotly, "that as soon as Rollin's hung, or even before, if necessary, I'll shove all that Frank paper forward and claim the mine in payment for the debts. What's to hinder? There isn't a

relative or a friend of either man in the State—except the fool who played bad poker to-day."

I was nearly petrified by the terrible disclosures being made, but I breathed into my hands to lessen the noise, and pressed on my heart to still its loud beating, as I turned my ears to catch every word.

"S'posen they gits onto the I O U's fer forgeries?" the other man asked.

"Who'll get on? Both men out of the way there's nothing to stop us, nobody to ask any questions."

"Well, what's yer game with me?"

"Nothing but keeping your mouth shut so far, and doing for Rollin—if he gets off by any chance, which isn't likely. And later on you to work the mine on shares."

"Thet all?"

"Yes—unless the wife and the girl that Rollin and Frank always wrote to happen to come on and make trouble; then we'll see. But all I want you to do now is to lay low."

"How much stuff did ye fetch?"

"Five hundred."

" 'Tain't 'nuff."

"Well, I've got a thousand, and plenty more to come next week."

"Fork it over."

Then the sounds of the clinking of coin transferred from one fiend to the other.

"Now keep clear of me for a week," said the gambler, rising. "Go ahead."

"No, I'll walk behind, plaze ye," said Fadden, and I heard them stumbling off down the slope.

Fadden was all the sneak and coward that I thought him to be. Arrested and charged with the murder he went to pieces and heaped the blame of the actual stabbing upon Green-eyed Charley with most amazing abandon. Half an hour later, at the point of a Colt revolver, the gambler was handcuffed and landed in jail. Equally soon was poor Rollin released, or rather taken to a sort of hospital, where the county provided a bed and a nurse, for brain fever had stretched him flat on his back. And it took a deal of skill on the part of two out of three sweet sisters, who came from the "States," to fetch him around to a proper condition to mourn with them for Horace, who was gone.

Green-eyed Charley attempted suicide in the jail, but failed to end himself. Two days after the trial of Rollin, so swift was outraged Justice in Faro Flat, the gambler stood on a box under a pine tree. Asked if he wished to say anything he merely nodded at me and remarked:

"I would like to advise that d—n fool to avoid playing poker."

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**Watch for the story, "Life's Fitful Fever," by Isabel Gordon Curtis, in the next number of this magazine.**

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## ONE-WAY GLASS NEWEST INVENTION

FOR making range-finders, checking eyepieces for gun-sights, for comparison oculars, binocular microscopes and for other purposes it has been found necessary to produce a one-way glass; that is, a glass which looked through from one side is transparent, while looked at from the other is opaque and functions as a mirror. This is brought about by silvering in such a manner that exactly the same measure of light is transmitted through it as is reflected by it. It was originally accomplished by silvering the entire surface of one side of the plate first and then removing one-half of the covering in the form of thin, alternate strips, set close together. Technical difficulties induced an improvement which consisted in covering the surface with a film of silver so thin that the same result is accomplished; that is, that there is a perfect balance of light transmitted against light reflected. The peculiar properties of platinum make it very desirable for its use in this respect have been technically developed.

This is another reason why the metal should not be used for making jewelry.

The invention was perfected in Germany before the war and it was immediately put to use not only for purposes of military observation, but also for the delectation of the most favored of the nobility. There was, for instance, the high-well-born Frelherr von Namenvergessen, who, being a man of wealth and influence, procured enough of the one-way glass to equip the guestroom walls of his castle so that they appeared as ordinary mirrors to his guests, while he had convenient posts of observation provided for himself at the back.

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## EFFECTS OF AN EARTHQUAKE IN A MINE

PERSONS who have been in mines during earthquakes of more or less pronounced intensity at the surface have quite different experiences, some claiming that the shocks were imperceptible in the mine, and others stating that they were quite plainly felt. Probably the conditions actually differ a good deal with differences in rock structure, the neighboring rocks in one case transmitting the vibrations readily and in the other absorbing and deadening them. In the *Bulletin* of the Seismological Society of America, Mr. W. F. Staunton, a mining engineer, describes his own observations in a mine at Tombstone, Ariz., in May, 1887, during a widespread earthquake which, at the surface, caused plaster to fall, threw down chimneys and disarranged foundations. At the time of the shock he was in a large inclined open stope about 150 feet below ground. The first warning was a heavy roaring noise, followed almost immediately by the beginning of vibration, which seemed to culminate in a very pronounced jolt. Loosened rocks from the hanging wall crashed down. In a neighboring mine the shock was felt at a depth of 500 feet. A man standing in a drift in hard white limestone felt impelled to brace himself against the wall to maintain his equilibrium, and distinctly saw, as he afterward stated, a wave or deflection in the solid rock approach and pass him. Mr. Staunton concludes, however, that while earthquake vibrations may be felt at depths of several hundred feet they are probably not a very serious source of danger in mines.

Probably, as suggested by Sieberg, in his "Handbuch der Erdebebenkinde," earthquake waves are of relatively small amplitude at great depths on account of the great weight of the overlying rock. It may be added that a special type of earthquake appears to be caused by mining operations and seismographs have been installed in certain mines in Belgium and elsewhere for the purpose of studying the phenomenon.

# A ROMANCE OF THE MORGUE

By JAMES G. GABELLE

SOMEHOW things are seldom equal in life. One man sows and another sells him mining stock which garners all his grain. A corporation exploits a breakfast food and an enterprising wight corners all the available corncobs, thereby cutting off supplies. A family denies itself necessities in order to educate an only son for the fistic arena and he turns out to be a minister. That which ye have hoped and toiled and sacrificed for ye shall never have. Which brings us to our story.

Flitting noiselessly about the morgue that towered above the sullen stream were the attendants. Wan and ghostly, they were more like specters than human beings. Among them was Pere Garsaud. An old man with thin fringes of white hair upon his otherwise bald head; thin, colorless lips, a few fast blackening teeth and eyes almost as dull and glazed as those of the dead around him. They had an introspective look under their thick, bushy brows, as of one who held constant communion with invisible things. As he shambled around, on his thin, spindling legs, he hardly seemed more alive than the dead on the slabs, yet they would tell you proudly, the other attendants, that Papa Garsaud could and did do more work in less time than many men only half his age.

There had been a time in an earlier year when Pere Garsaud had been fair to look upon, when pretty maidens had cast admiring, inviting glances upon him as he strolled down the streets of his native town, but with his mind filled with meter and hexameter, strophe and antistrophe, he had paid no heed, and they had passed on to other and easier fields of conquest, until now there was none so poor as to do him reverence.

"How long has he been here?" asked tall, handsome Jean Pegolan, who had just been invalided home from the front and assigned to duty at the morgue.

"Eh bien," shrugged Carbasse, wabbling all the wrinkles in his walnut face. "How should I know? Forever, perhaps. He was old here when I came, and, as you see, I am not an infant."

"But," insisted Jean with the persistency of youth, "who is he? Tell me something about him."

"Name of a name!" exploded the old man. "What is there to tell? Nothing, but that he used to write all kinds of verse which no one would ever buy. He gave that up, though it wrenched his heart-strings to do so, and now he is working upon some sort of encyclopedia. He has a secret chamber where he steals away and works when things are dull here. None has ever seen it, though we have often tried to discover the old mole's hiding-place."

"I shall find it," Jean boasted. "Trust me for that."

It was true, as Carbasse had said. On the lowest floor of the morgue, under the slimy bed of the sluggish river, was an abandoned chamber, once used for embalming purposes, but now forgotten by all except Garsaud. Here he had erected a little writing stand, and, with only a solitary tallow candle and the rats for companions, would toil upon that stupendous literary masterpiece that some day was to astonish and delight the world. Though he performed his tasks with scrupulous exactness, yet he begrudged every moment that took him away from it.

It was well known that once, in a half-hearted sort of way, he had made application to the government for a grant to enable him to publish his masterpiece, only to meet with a contemptuous refusal. He met the cruel rebuff in silence, only working a little longer, a little harder, and saving, if possible, a little more closely.

There was a call for Garsaud, and he came forward silently and swiftly, between the gray rows of the dead. He felt strangely at peace. He had received a liberal douceur for a trifling service, which, of course, went with the rest of his savings that already amounted to nearly enough to pay for the cost of publishing his monumental work. His chief had complimented him highly upon his faithfulness, and he had just completed, to his own satisfaction, a difficult subject for his encyclopedia which had necessitated many visits to the Bibliotheque Nationale, and now the end of his literary labor was in sight and in a few weeks, a few months at the utmost, it would be published. And wealth, honor, fame—world-wide fame would be his.

He was told to go and take charge of a body that had just been brought in, and such was the confidence his superior reposed in him that that mighty personage walked off and speedily forgot all about the matter.

The woman he had been sent to care for was extremely young and of extraordinary beauty. Her clothing, though frayed and worn, was of the costliest materials and made with perfect taste. Her slender white hands, well-kept nails and tapering fingers showed her to be of gentle birth and breeding. Absolutely nothing was known of her. She had been found dead in the Parc Monceau—Paris was full of refugees and there were many deaths from exhaustion. A coroner's jury turned in a verdict to that effect after a tired doctor had given a superficial examination and the body was sent to the morgue to await claimants.

Her death must have been painless. There was no trace of terror or suffering upon the face that was fair as a child's. Her eyes were closed as in sleep. Her brown hair, shot with gold, rippled in wild disorder to her waist. How marvelously beautiful she must have been in life!

Garsaud gazed upon her, enthralled. His breath coming in short gasps, like one that is spent with running. To this poor, old, starved beauty worshipper, in whom the high ideals and glorious visions of his verse-making days had never died, she was a revelation of loveliness. Finally, with a deep sigh, he turned and walked stumblingly away, like one groping in the dark, only to return after a few moments and continue his gaze as before.

"No," he finally said aloud, "she is not dead; she cannot be dead. It is only a sleep; she will awaken, by and by."

This idea took possession of him and could not be shaken off. He had seen one or two wretched creatures revive from a state of coma, that successful similitude of death, which had deceived even the doctors themselves, and he could not, would not, believe but what this was another case of the same kind.

He stood before the beautiful enigma for a long time in silence, then suddenly darted away. Entering the bare, bleak, ugly room, where so much of his life had been spent, he gazed with pride upon the tall piles of manuscript, or examined, with an old interest that was ever new, the small, neat letters on the clean white pages, which, despite

his great age, had all the delicacy and beauty of a copper-plate engraving, or else going to a corner and fingering some old leather bags, filled to the brim with gold coins of large denominations, the result of years of deprivation and self-denial. Then he would wander back to his precious manuscripts, to move the leaves, rearrange them or pat them with loving care, as one might caress a sleeping child. Then resume his walk as agitatedly as before.

At last he had come to a decision. Hurriedly clutching a roleau of gold, he thrust it in his pocket, kicked the piles of precious manuscript—the earnest labor of long years—upon the floor, and hastily departed.

In a short time he had effected a transformation. How one of his extreme age and apparent senility could do so much in so short a time was little short of the marvelous. Through a secret passageway that none but he knew of, he brought in many rare and costly articles, and transformed that vile, dingy, ill-odorous den into a bower of beauty.

Sky-blue silken hangings covered the ceilings and walls. Upon the floor was a rare Eastern carpet, so thickly studded with flowers that one seemed to be walking in a garden in Ispahan or Cashmere. To keep out the damp and prevent mold he had used the sheets of his wonderful, once-loved encyclopedia to tack upon the walls or strew under the rug upon the floor.

The room was brilliantly illuminated. He who had formerly begrudged the single tallow-dip necessary to work upon his encyclopedia now had myriads of wax tapers, in beautiful silver candelabra, scattered about on gold inlaid brackets. Here he had brought her, and here he would spend hours looking at her, devouring her with his eyes, expecting every moment to see some sign of returning life, to clasp her living form in his arms. For Pere Garsaud had forgotten that he was old and the days of his dreaming, poetizing, and romance-loving youth were upon him.

He shirked his work upon every possible occasion, a thing he had never been known to do before. They smiled indulgently. "Papa is getting old and his writing is eating his soul," they would say. It was supposed that the body of the girl had been stored away, awaiting claimants, in the vault reserved for that purpose. No suspicion of the truth ever crossed their simple minds. So they would finish the tasks he left undone and smile pityingly as they saw him hobble hurriedly away.

One day Garsaud entered with a heavy bundle of candles—they thought it was writing paper, knowing that he employed all his leisure in writing. He staggered down the dark hall that led to his secret abode, wheezing and puffing under his burden, and Jean, in a spirit of idle curiosity, followed.

The luxury, brilliance and beauty dazzled his eyes for a moment, so long accustomed to the hideous, ghastly and vile. He could scarcely credit his senses. The sumptuous room was furnished like the chamber of a palace, the silken hangings, lovely paintings and the marvelous silver candelabrum, while, like a priceless jewel in a gorgeous casket, lay the strangely beautiful woman for whom it had been created. Bending above her, an expression of adoration on his doddering, senile old face, was Pere Garsaud.

At last, reluctantly, he rose to go. He begrudged every moment he was away from her. Who could tell when she would awaken from her coma? He did not want to be away when she did regain consciousness. He had fancied he had seen signs of regaining consciousness. But he must go for a while, anyway. Jean Pegolan shrunk farther back into the passage as the old man tottered out, then crept lightly into the wonderful chamber with its charming occupant.

How wonderfully beautiful she was. Her long hair surrounded her like a cloud. The ivory whiteness of her skin was flecked with the faintest tinge of rose. Love instantly took possession of him.

Suddenly she stirred; a moment later her lids quivered, and then two lovely violet eyes looked inquiringly into his.

"Who are you? Where am I?" she demanded in a low, musical voice, now filled with alarm.

Through Pegolan's veins a wild, tumultuous joy went singing. She was alive. "Ah, thanks to le bon Dieu, she lived!"

"Have no fear," he said, reassuringly. Ah, how he longed to clasp her in his arms and guard her from all danger. "Have no fear, I am your friend."

"It all comes back," she said, slowly rising to a sitting posture, and passing her hand over her brow. "We were refugees from St. Veltour. My father and brothers were killed at the Battle of the Marne. My mother died from exposure. I came to Paris to stay with an aunt, but found that she was dead, too. While walking in the Parc Monceau I fell and struck my head. That is all I remember. How beautiful it all is! Where am I?"

Jean was about to answer when they were interrupted by a snarl as of a wild beast, and Pere Garsaud stood in the doorway, his wrinkled old face suffused with hate, his toll and age-dimmed eyes now snapping fire.

The fair girl gave a shriek of terror and cowered back on the divan where she had been lying.

"Oh!" she gasped in uncontrollable terror. "Oh, who is that awful old man?"

Jean advanced to meet Garsaud, but the latter, with an agility surprising in one of his years, sprang forward with the snarl of a wild beast, overturning one of the large candelabra. As he did so, the silken hangings caught fire, but they were too excited to notice it.

Garsaud fastened his long, talon-like claws in Pegolan's throat. The girl gave a terrified scream, but the two excited men paid no attention. The room was filling with smoke. Garsaud's claws were slowly but surely choking the life out of Pegolan. Suddenly, with a desperate effort, the latter gathered all his strength and flung Garsaud from him. The old man's head struck a stone pillar. There was a groan, a quiver or two, and all was quiet.

"Is—is he dead?" the girl asked, a sudden awe filling her.

"Yes," Pegolan replied, after a hasty examination. "It was his life or mine. But come," he added, imperatively—the smoke was already choking them—"we must leave at once."

"But where can we go?" she asked, holding back a trifle.

"To my mother's," he replied. "We will be married as soon as you say the word."

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## JAPAN TO INCREASE ARMY AND NAVY

JAPAN has made preliminary plans to increase her army by fifty per cent. and to build three times the number of battleships and battle cruisers previously planned. The project is to have an army of twenty-one corps, or twelve divisions, and a navy of three main fleets, each to consist of eight battleships and eight battle cruisers. Each of the new army divisions will be composed of three regiments instead of four, as at present.

# GIVING HIM A CHANCE

By M. QUAD

A LONG street running down a narrow valley, until ending at the entrance to a silver mine—a score of cabins built on the mountain-side—a store, a post office—mountains on every hand—that was Whiteville of ten years ago.

"Bur-r-r-r!" rang the telephone in the post office, as a girl sixteen years of age—the daughter of the postmistress—was leaving the place on a summer's day with fishing-rod in hand.

"Hello! Who is it?"

"That you, Mary Thompson?"

"Yes."

"This is Sheriff Jackson, of Lone Hill. I've just got news that a tramp killed a man at Cedar Creek last night, and was seen this morning making your way. He's a bad un and I want to catch him. If he shows up at Whiteville give me a call. Tell the men not to take any chances with him, but to knock him over if he resists. Do you catch it all?"

"Yes—all right. If he shows up here he is to be arrested and held for you?"

"That's right. Good-by."

The girl walked out into the street and looked up and down. There was not a man in sight. The mine force consisted of only about twenty men, as work had not fairly started yet, and they were all at work underground. Whiteville was a place only a few months old, and most of its inhabitants had gone over from Lone Hill, the county seat of the new county. It was far off the railroad and had no telegraph connection, but a telephone line had been run over the mountains to connect it in a way with the outside world.

"I'll tell them about it to-night when they come out," said the girl, as she looked up and down; and five minutes later, as she walked up the rugged valley, the message was almost forgotten.

Half a mile above the last cabin she turned to the right, passed through a defile in the hills, and came out on the banks of a creek tumbling down from a source high up in the grim mountains. There were trout in plenty in the stream, and in half an hour the girl had a good mess of them lying at her feet. She was still fishing when she heard a footstep near at hand, and looked up to find a stranger within touch of her shoulder. She did not cry out or exhibit alarm. She quietly reeled in her line, and then sat down and looked the man over. He was ragged and unkempt and had a ferocious look, and as his eyes gazed into hers, she felt that he meditated mischief.

"Why don't you ask who I am?" he fin[illegible]d, as he sat down almost at her feet.

"I know," she quietly replied. "It wa[illegible]r ago that Sheriff Jackson was telegraphing [illegible]ou. You stabbed a man at Cedar Creek last ni[illegible]

"And the Sheriff said I was to be arre[illegible]ed up here?"

"Yes. He has probably telephoned [illegible] and Black Rock, and they are sure to [illegible]

"It won't be until after I have fix[illegible] to go underground," muttered the man, [illegible]enching teeth.

The girl regarded him more attentively, and she decided that he resembled Tom Dayton. There was the same forehead—the same brown eyes—the same resolute mouth. The Sheriff had said he was a bad man, and he was fleeing from the vengeance of the law, but her heart began to soften towards him. He had been looking away from her across the creek. Now he brought his eyes back to her face, and they were lighted with sullen anger, as he said:

"They are all against me, but I'll fight to the last and die game. Come along o' me!"

No call for help could have been heard. The man pulled a wicked-looking knife from his bosom and scowled at her. For a minute her heart choked her, but then she brought a smile to her face, and said:

"I will go with you. I should like to hear your story, and I don't want any of our people to see you just yet."

He led the way across the creek, into and through another defile, and then turning to the left he climbed up among a mass of boulders. She followed without hesitation, and at the last she gave him her hand that he might pull her up over the rocks.

When they were seated, she said:

"I want to hear your story. You are an educated man and have seen better days. What happened to bring you to this?"

He waited two or three minutes before replying, and she saw that he was deeply disturbed. The resemblance to Tom Dayton grew more and more marked, and a strange thought had just come into her mind, when the stranger said:

"Girl, you ought to be begging and weeping and praying to God, for I brought you here to have my revenge on the world before they close in on me."

"I do not fear you," she calmly replied, as she moved nearer to him. "I have told no one of the sheriff's message, and no one will hunt for you here. Have men wronged you?"

"Aye! Damn them! They have brought me to this!" he almost shouted in reply, as he clashed the blade of his knife against the rocks. "It began ten years ago, when a fellow clerk robbed the firm in Chicago and fixed it so that I should be suspected. They sent me to prison for five years, and I was as innocent of theft as you are. When a man goes to prison he becomes a wolf—an outlaw—a thing in human form for all outside people to avoid. I lost liberty, character, friends, the girl who was to be my wife—everything but the thirst to be revenged. You don't know what a State Prison is."

"I have only read of them."

"It is a place where men think and think until they scream out with rage and despair. You work—you eat—you sleep—but working, eating or sleeping you never cease to think. It is bad enough for the man who is guilty and cannot deny that he is being justly punished, but it is hell for the man who is innocent of crime. As God is my judge, I tell you that I had wronged no man! If you had been with me last night when I drove my knife into that scoundrel, you would have seen him weep and grovel, and heard him beg for his life and confess to me."

"They wronged you," she whispered.

"May Heaven blast me if they did not! Can you conceive of the length of the days and weeks and months and years? Can you wonder that I wanted to do murder as I lay on my bed at night and thought of the years that must pass before I would leave that prison behind? There were hundreds of days which seemed as long as weeks. I moved like a machine. I forgot my own name. I finally ceased to count the days, and but for vengeance I should have become a lunatic or an idiot. I fought away the shadows that I might live for revenge on the man who brought about my downfall, and I have had it. When I came out at last who was I? An ex-convict—a degraded man—a thing to be driven from every man's door. The meanest and most contemptible of God's humanity was above me. I came West to look for my revenge and to make a new start in life. I got place after place, but the fact that I was an ex-convict always came out sooner or later and I was driven off like a wild beast. I have been hunted and hounded and baited until the end has come. I am here, and here I stay until I am shot down!"

"Men have not given you a chance," said the girl, as she noted the tears in his eyes, "but I will."

"You? What can you do?" he fiercely demanded.

"You want rest, and you can find it here. I will bring you food. After you are rested I will bring you clothes. I have a few dollars in my box, and you shall take them to help you get away. You have had your revenge, and now you must go far away and begin over."

"I meant murder when I brought you here!" he bluntly said, though the fire had died out of his eyes.

"But you have thought better of it," she smilingly replied. "I pledge myself not to betray you, but to aid you. I shall aid you and you will get away. If you were shaved and cleaned up you would look almost exactly like a man I know—the superintendent of the mine. I've been wondering if——"

"Yes, I meant murder," interrupted the man as he turned on her, "but better thoughts have come. I will trust you. I have had no food for two days. Can you bring me some this evening?"

"Within an hour," she replied. "Remain here and I will come back as soon as possible."

Within the hour the man was eating of the bread and meat she brought and speaking to her in kindly tones. No father message had been received from the Sheriff, and there was hope that with the girl's aid he might get safely away. When she went away, promising to come again early in the forenoon, he lay down beside a rock and thanked God that the black deed he had meditated had not been accomplished.

Tom Dayton, the mine superintendent, was still a young man, and was a boarder at the house of the postmistress. That he was interested in the handsome daughter was no secret, and that his attentions pleased her was apparent. He had come out of the mine and was smoking his after-supper pipe when Sheriff Jackson called up Whiteville again to say that the murderous tramp had been tracked to within a short distance of the town, and that he would sooner or later show up. It was the superintendent who answered the call, and when the talk was finished he turned to Mary Thompson and said:

"If the man shows up he will find us ready for him. He ought to be shot down like a wolf."

"Nobody should lay a hand on him for what he has done!" exclaimed the girl, hotly, thus giving away her secret, but from that instant she was dumb. They questioned and cross-questioned, but she would not answer. The sting of jealousy crept into Dayton's heart. She had seen the stranger; she had heard his story; she must know where he was hiding. He said nothing of his plans, but he determined to watch her and bring the refugee to justice. For two days she escaped his vigilance, though he discovered that she was carrying away food. On the afternoon of the third day, when she went over the same route with the ostensible object of fishing, Dayton followed her, and was finally led to the spot where the outlaw was concealed. He was armed with a rifle, and as the girl disappeared among the rocks, he quietly climbed up after her.

"You had best go away to-night," he heard the girl saying to the ragged and wolfish-looking man in the lair. "I have brought you this money and this coat, and I would do more for you, but I know I am suspected. If it was known you were here the men would turn out and hunt you down."

"It is always and forever hunting!" he savagely replied; "but there must be an end to it. God bless you, girl! You are the only living person who has given me a show since I came out of prison. I will go at once. I'll take the coat, but your savings—never! I'm low down, but not low enough for that. Shake hands with me, and don't think ill of me after I'm gone."

"I'm sorry for you—I pity you," said the girl, as she held out her hand.

"Now, then, up with your hands and surrender!" shouted the superintendent, as he rose up from behind the rocks and leveled his rifle at the outlaw's breast.

"Hunted down!" growled the man, as he flung away the girl's hand and drew his knife.

"Up with your hands!"

"Never!"

The rifle cracked, and the outlaw made a leap forward—halted, staggered, let fall his knife—cried out horsely, and he was dead a moment after he fell to the ground.

"You—you shot him down!" gasped the girl, as she faced Dayton.

"I did, and I'm glad of it!" he answered. "So you have been aiding and sympathizing with the murderer!"

"I—gave him a chance!" she stammered.

"What was he to you?"

"I gave him a chance, because—because he looked like you!"

The superintendent stepped forward and bent over the face of the dead man. There was not a familiar line for the first half minute. Then the eye caught up one, and after a minute the shooter uttered a groan and sat down on the rock and covered his face with his hands and rocked to and fro.

"Who is it?" asked the girl, as she went over and laid a hand on [illegible]lder.

"My [illegible]arry!" he answered, as he knelt beside the bo[illegible]ed the forehead on which the dew of death [illegible]ng.

## OUR WAR EXPENSES TO[illegible] RECORDS

THE United States Government war correspondent in August broke all monthly records by more than $100,000,000, amounting to $1,714,000,000, according to reports available on September 8. Ordinary war expenses amou[illegible]000,000, or $200,000,000 more than last month[illegible] This did not include outlays of August 31[illegible]ulated. Loans to Allies $244,000,000, not incl[illegible]e on August 31.

# BESIDE THE LOOM

By LEOTI LEIGH.

"WELL, Nelly," said my uncle, joining me on the long porch, "do you see any changes?"

It was the morning after my arrival. I had been looking at the Blue Mountains, and breathing the rose-perfumed air, and saying over and over to my happy self: "I'm so glad to be in dear Virginia once more!"

"I have noticed but one change," I answered Uncle Allen, "and that is in the occupants of the cottage by the spring. The Trents were there when I was here before. Baby May was a great pet of mine."

"May's father prospered while here, and has bought a little place of his own down the river."

"And who lives in the cottage now? I saw two young men come out of there before breakfast."

"Yes; they're my farmers this year. They live down there with their widowed mother—a weaver of great renown——"

"And a big talker!" said Aunt Myra, from the doorway. "You're such a girl for stories, Nelly, you must get Mrs. Erle to tell you some. She can serve you with any kind, from a ghost story to a panther yarn, having met both phantom and 'painter' face to face!"

"That woman has seen hard times; stirring times; exciting times!" said Uncle Allen. "She is said to have been a very beautiful girl, with scores of lovers, but she went through the woods and chose the crooked stick——"

"And got many a beating from her crooked stick," interposed Aunt Myra again.

"Yes; beatings and abuses of all kinds. Finally the stick ran away, throwing the support of three little children upon her. But she was mountain-born and bred, and had the rugged strength and steadfastness of her surroundings. She has been the heroine of many an adventure. You will enjoy her yarns, Nelly."

Impetuosity has ever been one of my characteristics.

"I should like to go down right away and see her weave and hear her talk!" I cried. "But how can I get her into a reminiscent train of thought?"

Aunt Myra laughed.

"No matter what you say, child, you will remind her of some interesting bit of personal history."

So I donned my hat and ran down the hill to call upon this woman of such varied life memories.

I heard the tramp of the treadles long before I reached the open door. So busy was the weaver that I had to knock before she saw me. At the sound she started and gave such impetus to the fling of her shuttle, that it fell at my feet.

I hastened to restore it, at the same time begging her not to rise.

"You are Mrs. Erle?" I asked, doubtfully, for I had pictured a bent and care-worn woman, bearing the marks of her struggle with the wolf. I saw instead a figure as straight as a plumb-line; a face that suggested trailing arbutus to my ever-fanciful mind; a pair of dark eyes as bright as a baby's, and heavy black hair twisted high on a well-shaped head.

Beautiful as a girl? Who could doubt it, or that she had quaffed of Ponce de Leon's fountain?

"That's who I am," she answered, cordially; "and I know who you are without asking. Your uncle's been expectin' you for more'n a week. You look enough like him to be his daughter. Take that rockin' chair and lay off your hat."

"Don't let me interrupt you," I said. "I never saw anybody weave, and came down to watch you."

Having thus stated half the truth, I drew my chair beside the loom.

The weaver smiled like one humoring a child, and bent to her task with the brief information:

"I'm weavin' jeans."

When the jeans had increased about two inches in length Mrs. Erle gave a sudden short laugh.

"It didn't look very friendly for me to fling the shuttle at you," she said.

"That was my fault. I knocked so abruptly it startled you."

"I've been a weaver, off an' on, ever since I was a girl of eighteen. This is the second time in all those years that I tossed my shuttle so hard it went out the door. I thought of that other time the minute it flew out to-day."

She stopped weaving and looked past me through the open window with so thoughtful an air that I scented my story.

"Tell me about it, please," I said, inwardly smiling at the remembrance of Aunt Myra's parting assurance.

"It was in December and dreadfully cold. Father was in the war. Mother was weakly and I had to take care of her and the children. I was older than the rest by a good deal. I had the crops to raise, had to plough, hoe, cut and shuck the corn, chop down trees and haul them, and do all that a man does and a heap that a woman does. The five years of the war seemed forty years to me. All the men for miles around were gone, and all the boys that were big enough to shoulder rifles.

"But at the time I was speakin' of, one of our neighbors, a young man, was home on a furlough; he'd been wounded in the arm. Him an' me had always known each other and liked each other the way a boy and a girl will, you know. Well, one day his mother come over to our house and she says to me:

"'Rose, where's Louis gone to?'

"'I don't know, I'm sure,' says I, and blushed up, for I was bashful and it plagued me to have her make out that I knew more about Louis' comings and goings than she did. I'd been wondering why he hadn't came around the day before, for he'd been in the habit of droppin' in every day.

"Louis was a great hunter. I've known him to go off in the mountains by himself and stay a week or two, hunting and trapping. But I knew that wasn't where he'd gone now, for his arm wasn't strong enough yet to carry a gun.

"A few days after his mother was at our house the door opened and Louis walked in. Mother had taken all the children and gone to see a neighbor a little way off, so I was alone. I was weavin' a carpet.

"Louis came over to the loom. He had a buckskin pouch in his hand. Without sayin' a word he took out a ten-dollar gold-piece and laid it on the carpet right

under my eyes. Then he took out another and laid it alongside of that one, and then another and another, till they stretched the full width of the carpet and part way back. There were fifty of them. Then Louis says:

"'Rose, will you share these shiners with me?'

"A little streak of sunshine came through the window and made the gold glitter till it hurt my eyes. I looked at Louis. His face shone yellow like the gold. I don't know why, but as I looked at him I didn't like him as well as I did before he went away and came back with all this money. I was troubled in my mind.

"'How did you come by all this, Louis?'

"'I earned it.'

"'How?'

"'By saving an army.'

"'What army? And how?'

"He began to brush the gold into a pile with his hand.

"'It ain't fair for me to answer a dozen questions for you before you answer one for me,' says he, laughing kind of queer; 'but a girl must always have her curiosity settled. Well, this army that I saved from bein' cut to pieces had got into a mighty tight place. The enemy had heard it was goin' to cross the mountain, and they throwed up fortifications on top and fixed a regular trap for it. At a certain place that they'd have to pass, trees were nearly cut down so that a few licks would finish them. Men were hid waitin' for the army to go by, and then they were to topple these trees across the road and shut off retreat. Things were planned mighty well, but the army got wind of it somehow. They couldn't go back, for they were runnin' from an enemy, an' they couldn't go on, for there was another enemy waitin' for 'em in front. They didn't know how to get out of the trap. Then a feller who knowed about me bein' at home goes to the general, and says: "There's a man not fur from here that knows every inch of ground on these mountains. If anybody kin lead us out of here, he's the man.'

"'Fetch him here double quick!' says the general.

"'So this feller——'

"'Who was it, Louis?' says I.

"But he clinked his money against my shuttle and laughed at my curiosity again.

"'This feller and five more, armed to the teeth, comes across me one morning and says: "You're to come with us and no questions asked.'

"'So they takes me to the general. He tells me the fix they're in and asks if there's any escape. I says yes. He waits for no more.

"'Lead me out and you'll be richer by five hundred dollars. Refuse, and you'll be a dead man inside of five minutes.'

"'I thought of you, Rose, and led them down through the valley and well on towards camp.'

"'Was it our men?' says I.

"I remember how dry my lips were and how choked I felt in the throat.

"'It was life or death to me,' says he, 'so what difference does it make to you which army I saved?'

"'If it was our men 'twas outrageous for you to take money, poor as you are! If you helped the enemy and prevented a great victory for our side, you're a traitor! And if you mean to say that thinkin' about me made you a traitor, I'll thank you to stop your thinkin'.'

"He took his hand off the gold and looked at me with a black face.

"'If it had been you, I suppose you'd have told 'em to fire away!' he says, with a sneer. 'You're mighty brave, but I can tell you it don't feel so nice to be shot.'

"I knew as well as if he'd told me that he had opened the trap and let the enemy out.

"I took the buckskin bag and put all the gold back in it.

"'I won't share your money, and I wish you good-day,' says I.

"He took the bag and turned away without a word, and I began to weave again.

"I was full of temper in those days, and I was all on fire for my country. To think that Louis had helped our foes made me so mad that I hardly knew what I was doin'. I gave my shuttle a tremendous fling, and it hit Louis in the back as it went out the door. Of course he thought I did it a-purpose, but he never looked around. Well, all kind feelings between him and me was over, anyway.".

"Do you think Louis would really have been shot?"

"On the spot and like a dog!"

"That wouldn't have saved the enemy's army. But, tell me, would you have refused to guide him out?"

"Miss Nelly," said she solemnly, "when Louis was tellin' his tale, I had no other idea. That was the soldier in me—and the Virginian. But many a time since then I've laid awake at night thinkin' about it. Of course, promises nor threats wouldn't a-moved me; but if I'd a-stood there lookin' around over hundreds of men, and knowed that I could be the means of savin' 'em or destroyin' 'em, I'm not goin' to say I wouldn't ha' led 'em out. I'm a woman, and God's put soft hearts in us women."

I was strangely moved by the fire of her glance and the rugged picturesqueness of her words.

She leaned over her neglected work, and tossed the shuttle through the warp, back and forth a dozen times. Then she gave me a sideways look, and asked curiously:

"What would you have done, Miss Nelly?"

And I, too, have asked this question of myself in those rare night hours, when sleep has refused to "weigh my eyelids down."

## HOW TO GROW MINIATURE TREES

FOR many centuries the Japanese have closely guarded the secret of growing miniature trees. By following the plan here described, however, almost any one can raise diminutive trees with little trouble.

Get a few large, thick-skinned oranges and halve them. Remove the pulp and cover the outside of the skins with thick shellac. That will keep the skin from shrinking, says the *Baltimore American*. Fill the skins with fine, rich soil, and plant therein a seed of whatever tree you wish to raise—or, rather, two or three seeds, to insure at least one good specimen. Make a stand of some kind so that the growing tree can be kept in an upright position, and set the plants where they will get plenty of sun; but do not keep them in a room that is likely to become overheated. Water them regularly, but not too profusely. After a time the roots will begin to come through the orange peel. When that happens, cut the roots off flush with the outer surface of the orange peel, but be careful not to injure the film of shellac. It is the cutting of the roots that stunts the tree. When the tree has reached maturity you can transfer it to a more attractive holder.

Conifers, such as cedars, pines and cryptomerias can be readily stunted; so also can other evergreens, as ilex and Citrus trifoliata. Some miniature cedars have been known to last more than 500 years. Fruit trees, such as the orange and the plum, blossom and bear perfect fruit.

# MESELF AN' O'FLYNN

By J. C. ROACH,

*Author of "Rory of the Hills."*

OCH, sure I cud give the noight tellin' sthories about that rogue O'Flynn. I have affin wished I cud lose him, but whin I think ov the forty years we have passed togathur, a saft sphot kums up in me heart fur him, no matthur fwhat he duz.

Did ye hear how Casey frightened the loife out ov him wid the "alegathur?" Casey ses he bought the reptoile to give to his wife's mothur fur a pet. Och, Casey is a villyun!

O'Flynn was wurkin' an a job ov wurk over in Hobokun, an' he boorded wid Casey. But he didn't know that Casey had the alegathur in the house at all, at all. So lasht Sathurday noight O'Flynn kem home fram an Arangman's wake. (There's nothin' gives Tim more plisure thin buryin' Arangmin.) Casey met him at the dure, an' ses he: "Fwhere wor ye to-noight, Tim?" ses he.

"I was over at McFee's wake," ses Tim.

"Arrah, fhwat did ye want at that lould Arangman's wake fur?" ses Casey.

"I wanted to make sure he was dead," ses O'Flynn wid a grin.

"And fwhere did ye get that eye?" ses Casey.

"At the wake! Where else?" ses O'Flynn.

"An' phwat wor ye doin' to get that?" ses Casey.

"I oney sed that, hic! Death was a great improvmint in McFee," ses O'Flynn. "Ha, ha, ha! an' that blackmouth, Gillfillin, gev me a puck in the eye across the coffun."

"An' did ye lave id go wid him at that?" ses Casey.

"Did I fwhat?" ses O'Flynn. "I lepped over McFee in the coffin. Now go over an' look at Gillfillin. Whoo!"

"Sthout is yer heart," says Casey, givin' Tim a squeeze that amosht broke the bones in his hand.

"Gi' me a lamp, Pat," ses Tim. "I'm toired, hic! I'll go to bed."

"Indeed, faith, an' I won't thrisht ye wid a lamp, an' the childer in bed," says Casey. (the thief knew he had the alegathur undher poor O'Flynn's bed that minute), "yer nat afeered ov the dark?" says Casey.

"I fear naythur man nar divil," ses O'Flynn, pullin' up his britches. "But gi' me a piece ov raw mate fur me eye."

Casey got him the mate an' O'Flynn wint up-sthairs to his room an' tuk aff his clothes an' stritched himself an the bed, an' put the raw mate an his eye.

Thin he begined to think fwhat more he'd do to Gillfillin whin he'd ketch him again.

'Twas thin the alegathur got a shmel ov the mate an' crawled up an the bed an' shnaped id aff ov O'Flynn's eye.

Tim stharted up an' so did his hair.

Fur there was the alegathur lickin' his lips an' luckin' at Tim wid his two fiery eyes.

Oh, boys! Ob'

Av O'Flynn had wings he couldn't get out an that fire eschape anny quicker.

An' who d'ye think was below at the dure waitin' fur him, but Gillfillin. An' he cud hear Tim's teeth rattlin' wid terrur an the laddher.

"Who's there?" ses Gillfillin, luckin' up.

O'Flynn sthopt an' looked down, fur he knew Gillfillin's voice.

"Kum down here," ses Gillfillin, "an' I'll tie ye in a knot."

"Go home," ses O'Flynn.

"Kum down," ses Gillfillin, "or I'll go up to ye!"

"Av ye do, it'll easht ye a set ov teeth," ses O'Flynn, shakin' a number thirteen fut at him.

It was a murdhurin' cowld noight, an' there was poor O'Flynn, wid nothin' an him but his shirt, an' that was so shart, id looked more loike a veshe

But he had to make a chaice between the Dival upsthairs an' a Arangman, wid a lead poipe at the fut ov the laddher.

He had to go up ar down, ar turn into an icicle.

So up he wint an' crawled in the windee. (As he thought, to face the Dival.) An' he was there sure enuff.

For there was Casey, wid stitches in his soides fram laffin'. For he was lishtnin' to all that happened.

"Fhwat wor ye doin' out there, Tim?" ses Casey (sphakin' out ov the dark).

(O'Flynn gev a lep till he almosht hit the roof at the sound ov Casey's voice.)

"Och! Casey," ses O'Flynn, ketchin his breath. "Did ye see him?"

"See fwhat?"

"McFee," ses O'Flynn, "he was here in the shape ov a crackodile!"

An' O'Flynn looked over his shouldher as if he felt Mc crawlin' up his back.

"That musht a been sthrong tay ye got at McFee's wake," ses Casey. "Who was that ye wor talkin' to out an the laddher?"

"'Twas Gillfillin ar his ghoast," ses O'Flynn. An' at that minute he cot a glimpse of two fiery eyes starin' at him fram undher the bed.

He carried the dure aff o' the hinges an' went down two floights av sthairs widout tichin' wan sthep—an' into Gillfillin's arums at the dure.

There was a shart sthruggle fur the "lead poipe."

An' thin iverything grew dark wid Gillfillin. O'Flynn shwears it's the lasht Arangman's wake he'll iver attind.

He's ready to meet thim aloive, he ses. But whin they turn into crackodiles an him, they're axin too much adds.

# THE FATAL PRINTS

## A Serial Detective Story

By WILLIAM S. HALL

### CHAPTER NINE

GRAHAM ENTRAPPED

"'WHO are you?" she demanded.

"'I am Bob Bowen,' I answered, 'and come from Bill to see you on his behalf.'

"'Where is he?'

"'I can't tell you that till we know whether you will let up on him or not.'

"'Of course I will if he'll marry me, as he promised.'

"'He is willing to do that as soon as he can work out of his trouble with the detectives.'

"'Oh! will he?'

"'Yes. He sent me to tell you so.'

"'Then tell him I will let up if he will give me a *written* promise that he will marry me.'

"'He'll do that.'

"'Then it will be all right.'

"'And you will go back home and say nothing about it?'

"'Oh, I can't go home.'

"'Why not?'

"'Because a detective is looking for me to lock me up.'

"'What for?'

"'I got my fingers in his hair.'

"'What did you do that for?'

"'Because he got acquainted with me, and got Bill's friends' names out of me, and by that means caught him. I was so mad when I found it out that I couldn't help flying at him and pulling his hair when I saw him.'

"'So you love Bill, eh?'

"'Yes, and the rascal don't deserve it, either. If he doesn't marry me, I'll kill him!'

"'How about the other girls?'

"'I don't keep account of them.'

"'Well, I'll tell Bill what you say, and will come and see you to-morrow, or the next day. You will let me in the next time, will you?'

"'How did you find me?'

"'Mike told me.'

"'Did he know where Bill was all the time?'

"'Yes.'

"'The wretch!'

"'He's Bill's friend, you know.'

"'Yes, it's all right, I suppose.'

"'Oh, yes—good-by—see you to-morrow," and then I left her.

"'She's dead gone on the rascal,' said I, 'and it would not be an easy thing to get her to go back home. I think she is more than half inclined to go to the bad, and, if so, she will be hard to head off.'

"I made up my mind to catch Bill first, and then go to her, throw off my disguise, and tell her that if she did not go home and behave herself I would arrest her for the assault and battery on myself. That night I met the gang at Higgins' den and carried the promised disguise for Graham. The beard and wig fitted him like gloves, and made such a change in him that his best friends would not have known him on the street. He was delighted.

"'I can change to a dozen different characters,' I said, 'and go right in among the cops when they are looking for me.'

"'This is tip-top,' said Graham.

"'Yes,' said Jack Coman, who was present, 'and your mashes won't know yer now.'

"'By the way,' I said to him, 'I saw Tillie to-day, and she said if you would give her a written promise to do the square thing by her when you have gotten rid of the police, she will let up on you, and be your darling again.'

"'Bully for you.'

"'But you must give the written promise.'

"'Yes, of course.'

"We then talked of a plan to get rid of Croly. I was to decoy myself to a certain spot, where the whole gang was to pitch in and settle me forever. They were pleased with the idea, and I was to let 'em know when they were to be ready. Then we broke up at a late hour, and went out on the street.

"'You have been keeping pretty close for some time, Graham,' I said to my man; 'suppose you go downtown with me and bunk at my quarters. You want to acquire some confidence in your make-up, and that's the best way to do it.

"'That's so,' he said; 'I'll go,' and we started off together.

"Now, I had made arrangements to have him arrested at my quarters in the event I found that he was the man I wanted. To that end I led him about to a number of resorts, and finally turned up at my rooms.

Of course, I brought out a bottle and some cigars when we were in the privacy of my bedroom, and drank, and smoked, and talked for some time. At last we prepared to retire to bed. We were to sleep together. I pulled off my coat and vest. He did likewise. Then came our shoes.

"'What number do you wear?' I asked.

"'Seven,' he replied.

"'Let me see your shoe.'

"He handed one of them to me. I turned it. There was the fatal mark on the bottom of it! It was only by a desperate effort that I could restrain myself from springing up and clapping a revolver to his head. But I waited.

"'Let's have a night-cap,' I said, getting out another bottle of brandy.

"He took another drink. The brandy was drugged. I pretended to take a drink, and then we got into bed. Twenty minutes later he was in a slumber, from which the booming of a cannon could not have awakened him. I got up and lit the gas. Then I took the metal copy of the mark and fitted it to the right shoe of the sleeping Graham. My heart was in my throat. The rings fitted exactly, but the cross-bars did not. I could not understand that. I

was too much excited, however, to see it then as I did afterwards. But, to be sure that I was making no mistake, I dressed myself and went out, carrying the shoe with me. Straight to the chief's house I went, and called him up. He admitted me into his parlor.

"'What's the matter, Ben?' he asked.

"'Look at that,' I said, giving him the shoe.

"He looked and detected the mark.

"'Why, where did you get it?' he asked.

"'The owner of it lies in my bed, drugged,' I answered, 'and I want to fit it to the cast in your desk.'

"'Where is the metal copy I gave you?'

"'Here it is, but it does not make it quite clear to my mind.'

"He tried to make it fit. But it would not let the cross-bar down into the grooves.

"'Let's go and try the cast.'

"He threw on his coat and went with me to his headquarters, where he took the cast from his desk, and tried to fit the shoe in the print.

"'No,' he said, after a silence of a minute or two, 'this shoe did not make the print in the mortar.'

"'Are you sure?' I asked, growing sick at heart over the disappointment.

"'Yes. You see the shoe does not fit the mark at all.'

"'But it—has—been worn some since the mark was made,' I suggested, like a drowning man grasping at a straw.

"'No, that would make no difference. This shoe has had nothing like the wear of the one that made the print. Besides the middle bar points lengthwise on the shoe in the print, whilst on this shoe two of them point in different ways—to the right and left. This shoe didn't make the print, Ben.'

"I looked to see for myself. I tell you, boys, it made me sick to think that I had not got the murderer after all. The chief was right. While the resemblance was close, it was easy to perceive that it was another shoe that made the impression in the mortar.

"'But who is this fellow you have drugged, Ben?' the chief asked.

"'It is Billy Graham.'

"'What!'

"'Yes, the cobbler who made the mark on the shoe.'

"'Why, how did you get him?'

"'I then gave him the story of my working the gang that had once rescued him from me.'

"'Then we can bag the whole gang?'

"'Yes.'

"'And scare Graham into telling whose shoes it was he marked in such a strange manner.'

"'Yes, if we can.'

"'Oh, leave that to me.'

"'The next day when Graham woke up, at about noon, he was amazed at seeing me—Ben Croly, the detective—sitting by the bedside, looking at him.

"'Hello, Graham!' I greeted, as he opened his eyes and looked around the room.

"'Croly!' he gasped, springing up in bed, and staring like a man suddenly confronted by his grandmother's ghost.

"'Yes. I am here, Billy, and so are you!' and I smiled.

"'Where—is—Bowen?'

"'I am Bowen,' I replied.

"A groan escaped him.

"'Oh, don't be troubled, Billy,' I said. 'You are not as bad off as you think you are.'

"'Then you did not see her at all?'

"'Yes, I did. She is all right, and I gave you the thing as straight as a telegraph pole.'

"'Then, what do you want with me?'

"'I have arrested you for murder, Billy.'

"'Murder! I haven't killed anybody,' and great beads of perspiration stood out on his brow.

"'No, Billy, I have found that out since you went to bed last night. You are innocent of the crime of murder, though you have been a sad dog among the girls.'

"He drew a long breath of relief, and said:

"'I know I have, but—they wouldn't—let me alone. The truth is, I—I couldn't help it.'

"I laughed in spite of myself.

"'Now, Billy, there's no charge against you, and you can be detained only as a witness.'

"'Witness to what?'

"'That I will tell you after a while. But I forgot. You can be held on a charge of conspiring to murder Ben Croly, the detective.'

"He turned pale.

"'You see, I have the dead wood on you there;' and I indulged in another laugh at him.

"After I had held him in suspense long enough I said to him:

"'Now, Billy, I will tell you why I thought you were the murderer I was in search of;' and taking up his shoe, I showed him the mark that had been my only clue. 'You see that mark?'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, the murderer I am in search of made a print with his shoe that left that mark plainly visible. It is an unusual mark, you know.'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, I hunted through all the cobbler shops in New York till I struck Truxton's.

"'There Tillie told me that Billy Graham used sometimes to make such marks on the boots or shoes he repaired, and actually showed me how it was done with the round punches and cold-chisel, which she found on your bench in the corner.

"'She didn't dream that I was a detective.

"'I was too sharp for that.

"'It was from her I learned the names of some of your acquaintances—the Coman gang—a bad set, Billy.'

"'Yes, I am going to drop 'em,' he said.

"'Of course you are, for the whole gang will go up the river, and you will be left.

"'Well, I found you as you know, and you gave me the slip. It was the roughest experience I ever had. The accounts in the papers revealed to Tillie how I had played her, and, when I went to see her again, she buried her fingers deep in my hair, whilst one of your pals snapped a revolver against my head. I threatened to arrest Tillie, and she ran away from home, and is now hiding with a girl she ought not to associate with. I want you to tell her to go back home, and you had better go back there and go to work, too, when you get through with this business.'

"'I will, I will!' he said, in a frame of mind to promise anything.

"'Now, I know that you put that mark on the shoe the murderer wore. I have a witness to that, in that you have been frequently seen to put such marks on shoes.'

"'I don't deny making the mark,' said Graham, 'but I did it just for fun.'

"'I believe you there, my boy,' I said, 'but I want you to see if you can't help me to identify the murderer.'

"'But how can I?' he asked. 'I don't know who he is. I don't even know who was murdered.'

"'It is not necessary for you to know either one. I want you to go with me in disguise, look at the print and try and see if you can't remember what kind of a man it

was whose shoe you half-soled on a certain day or week. If you will deal square with me, you shall not be troubled about the past, and I will patch up your case with the girls. You will also make friends that will be of good use to you in the future.'

"'I'll do it!' he exclaimed. 'There's my hand on it.'

"We shook hands on the bargain.

"'Now look here, Bill Graham. You see that I am a hard one to get away from?'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, now, if you try to play me false, I'll empty two revolvers into you!"

"'Ah! Don't be uneasy about me, Croly. I am only too glad to get a chance to start right again.'

"'Very well. Get up and dress yourself, and we'll have some breakfast. Then we will change our disguises so the Coman gang will not know either of us.'

"He got up lively, and was dressed in five minutes.

## CHAPTER TEN

### GRAHAM CLEARS HIMSELF

"WE went out to a restaurant where we had a square meal. Then we went to headquarters, where I gave him the print of the shoe in the mortar to inspect. He looked at it long and thoughtfully. Then he scratched his head and said:

"'It's a number seven shoe, and I think I'd know the man again.'

"'Can you describe him?'

"He shook his head.

"'Don't think I can, as I had no occasion to remember him particularly.'

"'That's an honest answer,' remarked the chief, 'and I like you all the better for it, Graham.'

"'Do you know his name?'

"'No.'

"'Was he a young man or an old one?'

"'I think he was a young man.'

"'Do you know any men on whose shoes you put that mark within the last six weeks or so?'

"'No, for I haven't worked any in a month.'

"'That's rather bad,' remarked the chief.

"'And very discouraging,' I ventured, 'after all this work.'

"'I would know them if I saw them,' Graham said, after a pause of a minute or two.

"'Did Truxton enter the names of his customers in a book?' I asked.

"'Only when he took an order to make a pair of boots or shoes,' he replied.

"I could understand that very readily, and so another slight hope was crushed.

"'Do you think this shoe was originally made in Truxton's shop?'

"'No, sir. It was not a custom-made shoe. The wearer bought it out of a shoe store.'

"That was all. We went out and took a long walk together. I wanted to talk more to him, and let him walk off the effects of the drug I had given him the night before. When we returned from the walk I asked him if he was willing to give the written promise to Tillie Truxton.

"'Yes; I like her well enough,' he replied.

"'Give it to me, then,' I said, 'for I am going to see her and try to persuade her to go back home again.'

"He gave me the written promise, and then wrote her a letter, both of which I put in an envelope.

"'Now stay here till I come back,' I said, 'and maybe I shall be able to bring you some good news.'

"I then went out and left him in the room by himself. An hour later I rang the bell of the house where Tillie was stopping, and was admitted. She was expecting me, and was eager to know if I had seen Billy. I gave her the letter containing the written promise.

"'Oh, how can I ever thank you for what you have done for me?' she exclaimed, tears in her eyes.

"'By going back home and waiting till Bill comes to fulfill his promise.'

"'Oh, I can't do that, you know. That horrid old Croly will arrest me. Oh, why did I act so foolish?' and she wrung her hands in genuine distress.

"'Tillie Truxton, are you really sorry for your act?"

"'Yes, indeed I am; and I would give anything if I could only go home with no fears of being arrested.'

"'Then you can go with perfect safety, for I am Ben Croly himself,' and with that I removed the wig and beard that had concealed my identity.

"She started to her feet in dumbfounded amazement.

"'Oh, you are deceiving me again!' she cried.

"'Indeed I am not,' and then I made her sit down and hear my explanations as to how I had discovered Graham's innocence.

"'Now go home, and after a while Billy will come and go to work for your father again, and then you can have him all to yourself.'

"'And do you forgive me for—pulling your hair?' she cried.

"'Oh, yes. We detectives meet with many unpleasant adventures, and we have learned how to make allowances. Will you go back home, now?'

"'Yes, right away.'

"She kept her word, and in ten minutes was on her way back to her parents over on the west side of town. When I returned I found Graham patiently waiting for me, and he was delighted with my report.

"'Now, Billy,' I said, 'I am going to pull the Coman gang to-night. You had better stay right here till the job is done.'

"'I will,' he said, and I went out and left him there.

"Taking a dozen officers in citizens' clothes with me I went up on the east side to the vicinity of Higgins' den, and stationed them in a secure place. At the appointed time the members of the gang came in and we all took possession of the 'back hole.' We went into the plan of fixing the detective at an early day.

"'Where is Bill?" Coman asked, turning to me.

"'He is with Tillie, and will be here at eleven. I got that little skirt very quietly settled, and they are billing and cooing again.'

"'Good!' cried Mike. 'That's well done.'

"'Yes,' cried the others. 'We ought to have another bottle on that.'

"'I'll get one,' I said, rising and going toward the door that led to the bar.

"'Good boy!' I heard them say, as I went out.

"Out in the barroom, I asked Paddy Higgins:

"'Hasn't Billy come in yet?'

"'No,' was the reply.

"I then walked out and went up to the sidewalk, where I made a signal to my men. They came forward, and filed down into the den. Two of them went forward, and covered Paddy with their revolvers. He stood stock-still, and trembled like a leaf. The others followed me into the 'back hole,' where we covered the gang of young roughs with our revolvers.

"'Surrender!" I cried.

"They sprang to their feet, held up their hands, and cried out lustily:

"'Don't shoot!'

"I pulled off my disguise, and said to Jack Coman:

"'So you see you haven't quite gotten away with Ben Croly yet.'

"'Great gosh!' groaned Jack, dropping back into his chair. 'It's Croly, boys, an' we are gone up, sure!'

"'You can gamble on that, Jack, and bet high, too.'

"'Hold out your hands,' said the sergeant.

"They held out their hands, and each got the bracelets, after which we marched them to the station and locked 'em up."

"The capture of the entire gang of young toughs who had once used me so roughly in taking a prisoner from me, rather gave me the advantage in the laugh among my fellow-detectives. They thought Ben Croly had played his cards well, and had showed some little detective skill. Congratulations came in from all sides. The Coman gang had been a terror over on the East Side for a long time, and good citizens breathed freer when they heard that the whole crowd had been bagged. The chief thanked me in very complimentary terms, and that was no little satisfaction to me, I assure you. Graham, too, was glad they were out of the way, as he feared they would think he had something to do with causing their capture. Every one of them were held, some for one thing, and some for others, as they were all hard cases. A day or two after the capture of the Coman gang, Graham and I, both well disguised, set out to go through the city over on the west side, in search of parties for whom he had done work, and on whose shoes he had put his peculiar stamp. Of course it was a fruitless search. It was like hunting for a needle in a haystack, and when night came we had done nothing at all worth speaking of. That evening I gave him money with which to go to a theater, and went myself to call on Dora Creighton, the heiress of the old miser. She received me with a cordiality that was particularly pleasing to me, and I thanked her in my most earnest way. Of course, her persistent Paterson admirer was there—Dave Cochran. She made me detail all my adventures since she saw me last, saying:

"'I look in the papers every morning to see if I can find out anything. I often see your name mentioned.'

"'Thanks,' I said, 'I am doing my best, and think I shall yet run the crook to bay.'

"'Have you any clue to his identity?' she asked.

"'I think I have.'

"'Oh, you won't tell what it is, will you?'

"'No, that would be very foolish on my part, you know.'

"'So it would.'

"I saw a smile on Cochran's face, and I knew intuitively that he thought I talked that way, in order to make an impression on the heiress. I also thought I could see a tinge of jealousy on account of her devoting so much of her time to me during the visit. It was on that evening that she made an impression on me that no other woman had ever made before. The result was, I went home that evening to dream of her. The next evening I called again, and again found Cochran there. She received me with smiles and a glad welcome, and, during the two hours I remained there, seemed to appreciate my conversation much more than Cochran's. At times I noticed a terrible black frown on his face, and it was quite evident that he was being tortured by a consuming jealousy. She noticed his frown, too, and it seemed to incite her to turn the full battery of her charms upon me. As usual, I went away first, and left him in possession of the field. A strange infatuation seized me. All day long, no matter how busy I was, her image was constantly before me; and when the day was passed and the stars came out, I hied away to her boarding-house and spent the evening by her side. I was madly, deeply, desperately in love, and the passion had come on me very suddenly. While not afraid of anything in the shape of man, I actually trembled in her presence, and worshiped her at the same time. I was not such a fool as not to know that I was in love with her; but I made a heroic resolve not to tell her of my love until I had succeeded in bringing the murderer of her uncle to the gallows.

"'Then she will think me more worthy,' I thought to myself, and I hugged that idea to my heart as if my destiny depended on it in this life.

"In the meantime Graham had called on Tillie, and had been received with open arms. The shoemaker promised to give him work whenever he wanted it, and he engaged to go to work as soon as I would release him from his promise to me.

"'Go to work, Billy,' I said to him, 'and when I want you I know where to find you.'

"He took my advice and went to work, and a steadier man than he turned out to be never lasted a shoe. One evening I met Cochran, as usual, at Dora Creighton's, and spent a pleasant hour. She tried several times to engage him in conversation, but he was gloomy and taciturn, and in a little while got up and left the house, leaving me in possession of the field for the first time.

"'Do you know I think he is jealous of me,' I said to Dora as soon as he was gone.

"'Well, he has no right to be, for he has no claim on me.'

"'I am glad to know that,' I said, and then I almost forgot my resolve not to declare my love till after I had caught the murderer.

"But the remark caused her face to flush, and I thought she expected me to say more, but I did not. That was the fatal mistake of my life, boys."

Here the old detective again poured out some of the contents of the little brown jug into the glass before him, and swallowed it at a gulp.

Then he looked into the glowing grate a few minutes, in a dreamy sort of way, as if his thoughts had wandered back to the days of which he had been speaking.

But five minutes later he drew his brawny hand across his brow and over his eyes, as if brushing away a vision, and continued:

"A half-hour after Cochran left the house I followed. Dora accompanied me to the door, and there, after bidding me come again the next evening, parted from me. In the next block I had to pass a dark alley that extended through the middle of the block to the next street. Just as I arrived opposite the alley I heard and saw the flash and report of a pistol. The next moment I felt myself clutching wildly at the air, and then all was darkness and oblivion. When I came to I was lying on a cot in a hospital, and two surgeons were attending me.

"'It was a narrow escape, Croly,' said one of them, whom I well knew.

"'What is it?' I asked.

"'Nothing serious. The ball grazed your head so close as to completely stun you, and making a scalp-wound which will soon heal.'

"'Oh, that isn't as bad as it might have been,' I remarked, glad it was no worse.

"'You are right. But who did it? Do you know?'

"'No.'

"'Some of Coman's friends, I guess,' suggested the surgeon.

"'Maybe so,' I assented, and then I closed my eyes to think.

*(To be continued)*

# CURRENT NEWS

## WATER WELL A GOLD MINE

While digging in a well at his water plant B. P. Steffens of Chico, Cal., panned out 15 ounces of gold, worth $300. The plant is owned by Steffens and his brother, Willie Ritchie, the prizefighter.

## POTATO CROP KEPT ENGLAND FIGHTING

The huge additional potato crop grown in England in 1917 enabled that country to maintain its position as a belligerent, visiting American editors were told at a dinner here by Rowland E. Prothero, president of the Board of Agriculture. He said that but for this one crop Great Britain might have been starved into submission.

## GIRL'S ALARM SAVES BANK FROM ROBBERY

Miss Florence Weaver, night telephone operator, prevented five automobile bandits from looting the vault of the Citizens' State bank at Mount Morris, Ill., near Dixon.

Her office is in the bank building. When she heard the bandits at work on the same she notified the authorities. They arrived in time to prevent the robbery. The bandits are believed to have escaped from the Cook county jail at Chicago.

## BUFFALO SKELETON INTACT

While cutting hay at Twin Lakes, Minn., between Greenbush and Karlstad, to-day, Henry O'Niel, of Spooner, came across the skeleton of a large buffalo. It was standing straight up in the mud, and the animal had evidently become mired many years ago and was drowned. Twin Lakes became dry about five years ago on account of ditches draining it, and there is a crop of good hay on it this year. O'Niel is bringing the head of the buffalo to Spooner.

## MONTE CARLO FOR AMERICAN TROOPS

General Pershing is reported to have under consideration the offer of the Prince of Monaco, who has tendered the use of Monte Carlo as a leave center for the American Expeditionary Force. There are hotel accommodations there for from 6,000 to 8,000 soldiers. The gambling casino would remain closed to men in uniform, as at present. American headquarters is said to be studying the difficulties incident to the distance of Monte Carlo from the front and also congested transportation.

## UNUSUAL OPERATION REMOVES BOIL IN MOUTH

Hyman Slepian of No. 2074 Mapes avenue, the Bronx, New York, underwent a rare operation recently at the Post-Graduate Hospital. It was successful.

About five weeks ago Slepian became bothered with a hard boil about the size of a marble directly back of the lower row of teeth. He went to a hospital and was informed that the marble-like boil could be removed, but at least four lower teeth must be extracted.

Slepian objected to the loss of his teeth and consulted his personal physician, who advised him to go to the Post-Graduate Hospital. Slepian arrived at that institution and was examined by Dr. Sillick, who performed the operation without the extraction of any teeth. The operation was completed in 9¼ minutes.

## MACHINES TIMED BY COW'S HEARTBEATS

According to tests made by the Canadian Government, milking machines to operate properly should take into account the heartbeats of the cow. Examinations have shown that there is a relatively small amount of milk in a cow's udder at any one time. Many times that amount can be obtained in a milking, because nature secretes the milk from the glands to which blood is supplied, as fast as the udder is emptied. The investigators making the tests referred to maintain that a milking machine should create a vacuum about forty-two times a minute, tallying with the heartbeats of the cow.

## RAILROAD EMBANKMENT OF MOLTEN SLAG

The plants of the Carnegie Steel Company in the Monongahela Valley are disposing of their slag to build a railroad embankment along the river. The molten slag is hauled by ladle cars which are provided with compressed air dumping mechanism which may be operated from the locomotive. The mechanism is locked to hold the ladles from spilling slag along the track. Bridges are floored so that there will be no damage from slag that may drip over. The wall of the embankment is faced with blocks of cold slag, and the space behind this wall is filled with the molten material. It makes an excellent material for railroad embankments and for filling in low ground areas.

## FRUIT PITS NEEDED FOR GAS MASK PURPOSES

For the purpose of increasing the quantity of charcoal required for the manufacture of gas masks the War Department is urging the people of the United States to save the pits of peaches, prunes, apricots, cherries and plums, and also the seeds of Brazil nuts, walnuts and dates. The department says these should be thoroughly dried and sent to local branches of the Red Cross, which will forward them to designated depots in each state. Cocoanut shells are used in the manufacture of gas masks, but the supply of these alone is not sufficient. For the purpose of obtaining these agents have been sent to remote corners of the world. A movement is reported to be under way to form clubs here similar to those in England, where they are known as "fruit stones and nutshell" clubs.

## A NEW PROCESS OF HARDENING LEATHER

A Norwegian engineer of the city of Arendal, Norway, claims to have succeeded after a series of experiments in inventing a method whereby sole leather can be hardened so that it attains two or three times its usual strength. The hardening may be done in several degrees, until the leather becomes stiff as wood. It is claimed that after suitable hardening, sufficient for common shoes or boots, it does not lose any of its elasticity. Another advantage claimed is that after this treatment the leather better resists moisture and heat. It is alleged that leather not otherwise suitable for anything but insoles may through this treatment become a satisfactory sole leather. The engineer is patenting his invention and sole leather treated after his method will soon be placed on the market in Norway.

## QUAINT INNS HAVE LITTLE CHARM FOR AMERICAN JACKIE

Considering the large number and the quaint, attractive type of the many barrooms in the small town at the American destroyer base, there is comparatively little drinking of intoxicants among the men of the fleet. It is unusual to see an American sailor who has imbibed too freely and the saloons are not crowded during the hours when the largest number of men are allowed ashore.

The men prefer to go to the "Men's Club," which was erected with funds provided by Americans in England and managed by the naval officers, or the Y. M. C. A. hut. The Y. M. C A establishment cannot care for many at a time, but it is being enlarged The reading rooms at both places are full every night, while the poolroom at the club draws a great many.

## TELEGRAPHY THROUGH THE GROUND

Some months ago interest was excited in France by a report that the German army is using a method of communication known as "telegraphy through the ground." The method appears to be a compromise between wireless telegraphy and plain telegraphy. According to *Le Matin*, a wire is placed along the fighting front with both ends extending into the ground, and current from a Rhumkorff coil or kindred apparatus is conveyed along it. Installed parallel to this wire, and some distance in advance of it, is another similar wire, in which current is induced by the first, thus permitting the sending of signals. The method is thus broadly similar to wireless, except that the ground forms the medium instead of the air. One would imagine, however, that although the method has the advantage that there are no intervening wires to be cut, it would be a very simple system to tap.

## ALCOHOL AS A BY-PRODUCT OF BREAD

Through the seizure of a still in a bakery in New Mexico, where a quantity of alcohol was discovered that had been distilled from bake-oven fumes, considerable discussion has taken place concerning the feasibility of manufacturing alcohol as a by-product of bread.

This still was a crudely constructed affair, the vapor from the bread being conducted from the oven into a worm, which was cooled by passing through a barrel of water, condensing the vapor. The baker was not arrested, as it was clearly shown that no evasion of the law was intended. However, possession of a still is in violation of the law, and this one was seized by the Internal Revenue Service. This baker states that quantities of alcohol can be manufactured for war use at a very small cost by army bakeshops and bakers in large cities. The practicability of the plans remains to be worked out.

## PRUSSIAN GUARD FAMOUS AS FIGHTERS

Bitter must have been the rage of the Prussian Guard. cream of Germany's fighting men, when smashed by the headlong attack of American troops at the second battle of the Marne.

The history of this famous organization dates back to the latter part of the seventeenth century, when men believed in the divine right of kings, and the troops of the Guard could be depended on to protect the sacred body of their sovereign when all other supports fell away. Yet these highly-trained regiments were defeated by troops, many of whom had been recently recruited from civil life.

The Prussian Guard was once a company of archers, known as the Trabant Guards. It was transformed into a real fighting force by Frederick William I. Drill with him was a ruling passion, and he lavished much attention on his Guard, scouring Europe for giants, as no man under six feet in height could enter his pet regiment. This requirement was abolished by Frederick the Great, who cared only for fighting ability. The stirring example of Napoleon's Imperial Guard caused the Prussian organization to be increased in size, and it now comprises a complete army corps. Into its ranks go the cream of each year's class of Prussian recruits.

## STRIKING LIKENESS OF THE AMERICAN FLAG OBSERVED IN SKY

A striking likeness of the American Flag formed of clouds in the western sky during a storm at Baltimore recently was hailed as a good omen.

During the late afternoon heavy clouds formed in the west and, together with thunder, indicated the approach of a storm. A dark cloud formed in the midst of a great light one and took the instantly recognizable design of the American Flag. It had the appearance of a flag flying. It was rectangular, in one upper corner was a particularly dark square similar to the blue field of the American Flag, and the remainder of the cloud was slightly ribbed horizontally, in appearance similar to the Stripes.

Another singular coincidence was that the apparition of the flag was in the west—as the "west front" is where the American Flag is now flying triumphantly in the battle. The apparition lasted about five minutes.

## NEW FISH FOUND IN MASSACHUSETTS

George H. Graham, a Fish and Game Commissioner of this State, came to Onoto Lake, Mass., recently, and, as a result, has opened a new vein of angling, fishing for the landlocked smelt. Fishing with Fred Zeigler within fifteen minutes they took half a dozen fish six inches long. The fish is not only delightful to eat, but doubtless the catching of these little fish will afford fun to men, women and children.

The tackle consists of a small hook, a fine line and a one-ounce sinker. The fishing is done off the bottom. Garden worms are used as lures. The smelt bite lightly and the angler must be quick to hook them. Some who have tried the landlocked smelt like them better than trout.

The fish were introduced some years ago, and so successful was the planting that for four years the commission has been shipping from this lake landlocked smelt to stock other lakes, besides taking millions of eggs.

## CHEWING GUM FOR THE ARMY

Orders have just been placed by the Quartermaster Corps for 2,300,000 packages of chewing gum for the army. It has been found that on long marches and where the troops are unable to get sufficient water, chewing gum is very effective in relieving thirst. Recently the commanding officer of a regiment of field artillery, when embarking for overseas service, stated that 250 pounds of chewing gum would save hundreds of gallons of water when most needed. He pointed out that chewing gum is cheap, and that there are times when water is very expensive and at times unobtainable. Precautions to save water are therefore being taken. The lemon drops used by the army are prepared from a special formula tested for its thirst-quenching qualities. Canned tomatoes have also been found effective for thirst. A can of tomatoes in the front line trenches has several times the results of the same volume of water. This is ascribed to the mild acidity of the canned tomato.

## QUEER THINGS OF HISTORIC INTEREST IN LONDON SANCTUARIES.

In St. Dion's in Fenchurch street there are four monster syringes, which were at one time the only form of fire brigade appliances in London. The celebrated golden tombstone in St. Katherine's, Regent's Park, is very well known. It is a tombstone, or rather a small slab of pure gold, surrounded by an oak frame.

Many people are unaware that the body of Nell Gwynne reposes in a vault in St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and a still larger number of persons are ignorant of the fact that beneath the same church there is still in existence the old parish whipping-post.

Beneath St. Etheldreda's Church in Ely Place is the only subterranean place of worship in London. It is a completely furnished chapel with sitting accommodation for 200 people. St. Etheldreda's is the oldest Roman Catholic Church in England.

## NIGHT SURVEYING IN THE DESERT

In laying out the seventeen-mile tangent of the Lincoln Highway across the Utah desert it was found very difficult to carry on the work in the daytime. Says the *Engineering News Record*, the sunlight reflected from the fields of glistening salt and alkali, is so dazzling that it blinds the eyes, unless they are proctected by dark-colored glasses, and the rising heat waves distort the shapes of objects sighted and produce fantastic effects. These factors and the familiar mirage would result in inaccuracy and confusion unless proper methods were employed for establishing the lines. Under George F. McGonigle, State Engineer and a member of the State Road Commission, this tangent was established by signal fires at night. The connecting levels and transit lines have been run during the twilight hours. Construction of the new direct route, which will eliminate fifty miles of extra travel around the south point of the salt marsh, is under way. A force of convicts is also improving the Fisher Pass section.

## FOUNDER OF THE Y. M. C. A.

While the war is not yet ended, the American Y. M. C. A. and brother organizations among our Allies have already won praise from the highest military commanders for their work in maintaining the spirit of the armies of democracy. This great organization originated in an invitation extended by George Williams, a London dry-goods merchant, to his young men employees to meet in an upper room of his store for a period of Bible study and prayer. This was in 1844. The meetings were so successful that larger and better quarters were secured and other young men were invited to join. Similar associations were formed in other English cities. In 1851 the movement reached America, that year witnessing the formation of the Y. M. C. A. branches in Montreal and Boston. In 1854 the first international conference met in Paris, with delegates present from America, Canada, England and several countries of continental Europe. There are now 10,000 branches in the world, of which 2,192 are in North America. The international headquarters of the Y. M. C. A. are at Geneva, Switzerland.

## ABOUT ROYALTY

It is said that there are living in Great Britain to-day some thousands of persons of royal lineage, two or three thousand of whom have by right of descent a better title to the throne than has King George.

It is proper to add, however, that for these persons an obstacle in the way of their putting in a claim exists in the shape of the act of settlement of 1701, which fixed the succession on the descendants of Sophia of Hanover, granddaughter of James I.

As many as possible of the descendants of Edward IV., Henry VII. of England and James III. of Scotland have been traced. The investigation has shown that almost every monarch of Europe figures in the list with many of the European nobility, together with a host of Smiths, Browns and Robinsons. Some years ago a descendant of the Plantagenets was found plying his trade, that of chimney sweep, under the name of Plant.

The Duke of Devonshire, whose number was 3653, stood ahead of King Edward by reason of the fact that he was a descendant of Henry VII. in the sixteenth generation.

## LIGHTNING RECORDER HELPS OUR FLYERS

One of the most important things that military aviators wish to know about the air before venturing on long trips of several hundred miles, is the whereabouts of thunder storms. At all well appointed training camps various meteorological data are recorded, such as changes in the barometer, wind velocity, etc.

A highly sensitive electrical recorder described in the *Electrical Experimenter* makes a mark from a pen on a slowly revolving paper chart, secured to a clockwork driven drum, for every lightning flash occurring in the vicinity. In fact, so sensitive is this instrument that electric storms more than 200 miles away have been accurately recorded on it. It operates in a similar manner to wireless receiving sets of early type, which operated with a coherer or metal filings tube which responded to the electric waves.

The filings coherer is so sensitive that it will respond to all such unusual atmospheric disturbances, and thus lends itself well to such purposes as this. The filings are minute grains of nickel and silver or steel silver—a ratio of 90 per cent. nickel or steel to 10 per cent. silver is commonly used.

## FIBER CONTAINERS AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR GLASS AND TIN

The use of fiber containers in marketing various food products has greatly increased because of the shortage of tin plate. The principal question raised concerns the kinds of products that can be successfully marked in such containers. The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce has been advised by a manufacturer that the following named articles have been successfully handled by the users of its fiber containers: Sirups that do not ferment; jellies, jams, marmalades; honey; salted nuts; marshmallow products known under trade names such as marshmallow whip, mallow topping, and the like (these products to be used for soda-fountain trade, household use, etc.); marshmallows; hard candies; chocolate-coated confections; sugar butter (spread for bread); malted milk; glace fruit; shoe whitening; cocoa; and almost every one of the most commonly used spices.

The following products may be packed in fiber containers for a short length of time: Cottage cheese and other soft curd cheeses, lard, pickled fish, sausage meat, horseradish, sauerkraut, ice-cream, and various delicatessen products and soda-fountain supplies.

Another use for the fiber containers is as measures for dried products, such as crackers, small cakes, salted peanuts, salted and dry-cured fish of many varieties and most kinds of sweets and candies.

One concern has reported that it has an order for fiber containers to be used for holding a liquid chemical fire extinguisher.

### A READY MARKET FOR HOME-CANNED GOODS

A ready market has been developed in South Carolina for all home-canned fruits and vegetables that will be put up during the coming canning season in excess of domestic needs, announces the Conservation and Production Division of the South Carolina Food Administration, which has been working on the problems of marketing of home-canned products for the past two months. A number of the leading wholesale grocers and jobbers of the State have not only expressed their willingness to buy home-canned fruits and vegetables, properly prepared for commercial use, but will do all in their power to assist in taking care of these products.

Canning clubs, community clubs, or marketing agencies throughout the State, with large quantities of canned fruits and vegetables to offer for sale, are instructed to write the Conservation and Production Division of the South Carolina Food Administration, stating what they have to offer at the present time or what they will have to deliver in the fall, stating the price desired and all information. The Food Administration will make no purchases or sales, but it may serve as a connecting link to bring the canners and the dealers together.

### A NEW OIL FIELD

Though many people still believe that "no man can see further into the ground than any other," the present is an era of systematic geologic search for oil, and recently a geologist stated that in one producing region the use of the field methods now employed by skilled geologists reduced the number of dry holes from 47 per cent. to 33 per cent. of the total.

There are still many elements of uncertainty in the search for oil pools, but some of these are reduced to a minimum in regions where rock outcrops are conspicuous and the relation of the oil pools to the structure of the rocks is relatively simple. These are the conditions in the Big Horn Basin, Wyo., a report on which has recently been published by the United States Geological Survey Department of the Interior, as Bulletin 656, "Anticlines in the Southern Part of the Big Horn Basin, Wyo."

Though oil was known to exist in the Big Horn Basin as early as 1888 and sporadic attempts have from time to time since been made to discover it in large quantities, the production of oil in this region may be said to have begun in 1906, when wells were drilled in the Byron field. Wells were afterward drilled in several other parts of the basin, and though small quantities of oil and gas have been discovered in fourteen fields, the region is well known largely because of the production since 1914 from the Grass Creek, Elm Basin, Greybull and Torchlight fields. From 1914 to 1916 the production of oil in Wyoming rose from 3,560,375, to 6,234,137 barrels, and a considerable part of this increase has been derived from the fields just named.

The report describes fifty anticlines and domes, twenty-seven of which have been tested by drilling. Four of these contain very productive oil and gas fields, and seven contain fields that are less productive and less promising.

### SIMPLE SUGAR EXTRATION FROM BEET

Some recent experiments have shown that the extraction of intensely sweet syrup from sugar beet suitable for any kind of household use is quite easy. The plan can be carried out on a very small scale and, when generally known, is sure to be widely adopted. Sugar beets as a garden crop is more largely grown than formerly and there should be plenty of roots this season.

The best roots should be lifted in the usual way, care being taken that they are not injured. It is most needful to avoid breaking the skin. The roots should be treated in small quantities as the sweet stuff is required. This is because the syrup will not keep in good condition for more than a month or so. The method is to wash the roots well in water so as to get all the dirt away. Take care again not to break the skin in any part, or much of the sweetness will be lost in the next stage. Place the roots in a pan and boil them in water until the skin can be easily peeled away. Then slice the roots thinly and put the pieces into the pan again. Just cover them with water. Bring to the boil once, and allow the whole to simmer slowly for about ten hours. This treatment may be spread over two days if it is more convenient.

At the end of this summering take the pulp and put it into a muslin bag. Then hold over a bowl and with the hands squeeze out all the juice you can. This juice is placed in a pan and boiled until it becomes thick and syrupy. The syrup will be very sweet indeed and of great value for all ordinary purposes.

As has been indicated this syrup will not keep for an indefinite period, but it is easy to make it as required for use. The beets can be stored away in a dry, frost free place and taken out as needed.

## HELP WIN THE WAR

Give our boys in the Army and Navy every fighting chance. Pledge yourself to save to the utmost of your ability and to buy War-Savings Stamps.

There are enemy aliens and there are native aliens. The American who does not do his part toward winning the war, who neither fights nor works nor lends for victory is as much an alien to America's purposes and America's cause as the rankest Prussian interned in this country. This is a war of peoples as well as of nations, and each individual has a place and a duty.

If our soldier boys deliberated as long over doing their duty as some of our people at home hesitate over doing theirs, the victory would be doubtful. It is a sort of financial cowardice to hesitate to put your money in United States Government securities, and to deliberate over the wisdom and patriotism of the investment is to hesitate in supporting our soldiers.

The United States has now loaned to our allies $6,091,590,000. The advances average about $400,000,000 a month. These loans to our allies are analogous to lending weapons to friends who are aiding you in the defense of your own home. The money is being used to defeat our enemy, to maintain armies fighting side by side with our soldiers, and fleets patrolling the same oceans with our allies.

Every time you read, you purchasers of Liberty Bonds and War-Savings Stamps, of what the United States is doing in France in building wharves and railroads, or deluging the Germans with gas or shelling them out of position with big guns or shrapnel, or of bombing their arsenals or cities, or of the great work of our Army and our Navy, or of the building of ships here, or of any or all of the great or small achievements of America, here or abroad or on the seas, you buyers of Liberty Bonds and War-Savings Stamps truthfully can say: "I had a hand in this;" "I contributed to this;" "I am helping do this;" "It is part of my work."

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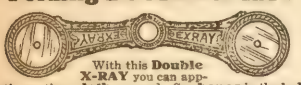


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Up to 7 inches, and plays them properly. This machine is simply wonderful—not to be compared with any other of this kind. Will give you more entertainment than anything you ever owned. Strong and durable. Small and compact with no parts to get out of order.

**Every Machine Regulated and Tested before it leaves the factory**

and guaranteed in every way. A real phonograph, not a toy, yet small and light enough to be carried to camps, excursions, etc. Gives a clearness and volume of tone not surpassed by most high-priced instruments.

## Free to You—Send No Money

Just your name and we will send you 24 of our Art Pictures to dispose of on special offer at 25c each. Send us the $6 you collect and for your trouble we will send this new improved E. D. L. Phonograph and a selection of 6 records, free for your trouble. You can dispose of pictures and earn this great machine and the records in a few hours' time.

E. D. LIFL, 337 W. Madison St., 8T46 Chicago

# TOBACCO HABIT

# Easily Conquered in 3 Days

*Picture No. 1—Shows how tobacco has nearly wrecked a man's career. He has become nervous, dyspeptic and irritable; he cannot sleep well; has gas on stomach; constipation. No. 2—The doctor says: "Progressing you this medicine but it will do very little good, unless you stop killing yourself with tobacco." No. 3—Still a slave; another collapse. No. 4—Wife reads advertisement of Mr. Woods. No. 5—Writes for Woods' FREE BOOK. No. 6—Being convinced by multitude of proofs, he has ordered remedy which is on her postman is now returning. No. 7—Has begun to overcome tobacco craving. Already is feeling much better; vigor and ambition returning. No. 8—Surprising improvement; all craving gone, filled with new courage and backed by good health. No. 9—Beginning anew. No. 10—Succeeding in business. No. 11—No trouble to resist temptation of tobacco in any form. No. 12—By clear-headedness, good health and energy, he has now become prosperous.*

## *Would You Like to Quit Tobacco Quickly and Easily and Enjoy Yourself a Thousand Times Better While in Robust Health?*

## STOP RUINING YOUR LIFE

Why continue to commit slow suicide when you can live a really contented life, if you only get your body and nerves right? It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to rid oneself of tobacco by suddenly stopping with "will-power"—don't do it. The correct way is to eliminate nicotine poison from the system, and genuinely overcome the craving.

**Tobacco is poisonous and seriously injures health in several ways,** causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gas belching, gnawing, or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach; **constipation, headache,** weak eyes, **loss of vigor,** red spots on skin, **throat irritation,** catarrh, asthma, bronchitis, **heart failure, melancholy,** lung trouble, **impure** (poisoned) **blood,** heartburn, torpid liver, **loss of appetite,** bad teeth, **foul breath,** lassitude, **lack of ambition,** weakening and falling out of hair and many other disorders.

**Overcome that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco, or snuff.**

**Here is an opportunity to receive FREE a carefully compiled treatise on the subject,** containing interesting and valuable information that you should be glad to learn about. This book tells all about the renowned **THREE DAYS' METHOD** by which **thousands and thousands saved themselves from the life-wrecking tobacco habit.** Full particulars, including the book on tobacco and snuff habit, will be mailed **FREE TO YOU,** in plain wrapper, postpaid. All you need do is **merely REQUEST IT.** A postcard will do. Address

# FREE

**EDWARD J. WOODS, WH 101, Station F, New York, N. Y.**

*NOTE.—To those who are injuring their health, making themselves nervous, dyspeptic, etc., by excessive use of cigarettes, cigars, pipe, snuff or chewing tobacco:—here is your opportunity to quickly and easily become your own master.*

**IF** this should meet the eye of any person troubled with freckles who would like to obtain an unsurpassed method for removing these freckles and clearing the skin of other defects, here is the genuine cosmetic **Guaranteed.** Send 10 three-cent stamps (37c) for a jar of **KINGLO CREAM.** Positive in action; approved. **ELIZABETH KING, RC-101, Station F, New York, N. Y**

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**100,000 ADVERTISING QUESTIONS ANSWERED** in Mahin's Advertising Data Book. Fits vest pocket, 260 pages. Contains 5 fundamental tests to apply to every ad or letter which represents you. Sent on 5 days' free trial. John Lee Mahin, 1 E. 39th St., N. Y. City.

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**$2 BUYS 100 SHARES.** Also options for 30 days 100 shares at same price. 2 Producing Wells. Others drilling. Dividends guaranteed by National Bank Certificate of Deposit. Agents wanted. Money Back Oil Co., 712 Foster Bldg., Denver, Colo.

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**STAMPS:** 105 mixed, incl. China, etc., 2 cts.; Album (500 pictures), 3 cts. Bullard, No. 20, Sta. A, Boston.

**FREE**—8 different Canada War Stamps to approval applicants. R. F. Robinson, Winnipeg, Canada.

**50,000 COINS,** medals, bills, Indian curios, firearms, daggers, spears, antiques. Catalog free. Collectors' Exchange, Dept. 13, 1536 Willington St., Philadelphia.

**STAMPS**—58 all different, Transvaal, Turkey, Brazil, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Ceylon, Java, etc., and Album 10 cents; 1,000 finely mixed, 20 cents; 65 different U. S., 25 cents; 1,000 hinges, 8 cents. Agts. wtd. 50%. Bargain list free. I also buy stamps; send what you have. C. Stegman, 5942 Cote Brilliante Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

**FREE**—5 unused French Colony stamps to approval applicants. Edwin H. Bailey, (S.S.) Farmingdale, N. Y.

**100 ALL DIFF.,** incl. Cuba, Peru, Egypt, Greece; perforated gauge, album. Only 10 cts. offer always good. C. M. Gibbs, S-8922 Juniper St., Los Angeles, Cal.

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**REDUCE WEIGHT HAPPILY.** If you are too fat, send for interesting book telling the best way to become slender, healthier and beautiful. Sent in plain envelope. Kroeh Company, NB-601, Sta. F, New York.

**TOBACCO HEART.** If smoking is affecting your heart or if it is weakening your eyes, conquer tobacco habit now and avoid early death or blindness, a fate that has befallen many others. Quit without drugs and improve health wonderfully. MacLevy's method is highly praised. If cured you pay us only $1. If not cured, costs you not a cent. Write for it to-day. Albro Society, AA-601, Station F, New York, N. Y.

**MORPHINE AND LIQUOR** habits successfully cured at home. Send stamp for booklet of information. Dr. Quayle's Sanitarium, Madison, Ohio.

**SEX PHILOSOPHY.** Ten reasons for sexual trouble in men and how to relieve in 48 hours; sent sealed for stamp. Retailers Co., Toledo, Ill.

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**U. S. GOVERNMENT** wants help. Men, women, 18 or over. War preparations compelling thousands appointments. $100 month. Easy clerical work. Short hours. Vacations with pay. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for list and description of positions. Franklin Institute, Dept. P-103, Rochester, N. Y.

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**FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN,** $140-$200 monthly. Colored Porters, by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 881 By. Bureau, E. St. Louis, Ill.

**$5.00 A DAY GATHERING EVERGREENS,** roots and herbs. Ginseng, $14 lb., Belladonna Seed, $64 lb., or grow it yourself. Book and war prices free. Botanical, 66, New Haven, Conn.

**FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN,** $140-$200, colored porters, by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 881 By. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

## MUSICAL

**WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG.** We write music and guarantee publisher's acceptance. Submit poems on war, love or any subject. Chester Music Company, 538 So. Dearborn St., Suite 749, Chicago, Illinois.

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**ST-STU-T-T-TERING** and stammering cured at home. Instructive booklet free. Walter McDonnell, 15 Potomac Bank Building, Washington, D. C.

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**WANTED TO BUY** typewriters, any make. Give description. M. M. Selde, 142 E. 32d St., New York.

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**SELL "PERSHING IN FRANCE."** Great war picture. Big patriotic hit. Make $10 daily. Regular 25 cents. Sample 15 cents, prepaid. Send now. Address: Publisher School News, New Egypt, N. J.

**WHEN DO FISH BITE BEST?** The Old Fisherman's Calendar tells when. Go on the right days. Send 25 cts. to-day to O. F. Calendar, Box 946 H, Sta. Springfield, Mass.

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**POWERINE IS EQUAL TO GASOLINE AT** 5 cts. a gallon. Salesmen and agents wanted. Exclusive territory granted. Powerine is guaranteed to be harmless, to remove and prevent carbon, doubling the life of all gasoline motors, saving repairs, adding snap, speed and power. An amount equal to 20 gallons of gasoline will be sent to any address in the U. S., charges prepaid, for $3.50. Porter Barnes, Dept. 10, Santa Rosa, Cal.

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## Send Your Name and We'll Send You a Lachnite

DON'T send a penny. Send your name and finger size and say, "Send me a Lachnite mounted in a solid gold ring on 10 days' free trial." We will send it prepaid right to your home. When it comes merely deposit $9.75 with the postman and then wear the ring for 10 full days. If you, or if any of your friends can tell it from a diamond, send it back. But if you decide to buy it—send us $2.00 a month until $15.75 has been paid.

**Write Today** Send your name now. Tell us which of the solid gold rings illustrated above you wish (ladies' or men's). Be sure to send finger size.

**Harold Lachman Co.,** 12 N. Michigan Av., Dept. 2667, Chicago

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Not $1.00, not even 50c, not one cent cost to you under our easy conditions. No extra charges for fancy styles, belt loops, golf bottoms, pearl buttons, all FREE. Before you buy a suit or pants, before you take another order, get our free samples and wonderful new offer. All other Agents write too. Ask for the big, new different tailoring deal. Costs nothing, write today. Address

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Best Grade steel, tempered, ground and polished. Lewis point, 4-inch blade; strong metal handle to meet the rugged use of woods or camp. Heads man of strong leather, with riveted tang to carry on belt. Lone Scouts, this is the biggest bargain you ever saw. Price 35 cents postpaid. Catalog Free.

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## To the Wife of One Who Drinks

I have an important confidential message for you. How to conquer the liquor habit in three days and make home happy. It will come in a plain envelope. Wonderful, safe, lasting, reliable, inexpensive method; guaranteed. Write Edw. J. Woods, WM 101, Station F, New York, N. Y. Show this to others.



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for us. We buy all you raise. Easy to raise—prices higher—big demand. Pay better than poultry or squab. Particulars, contract, booklet how to raise FREE. Write today. "DAVIES DISTRIBUTING CO., 3196 Grand Ave., Kansas City, Mo."



# Why Be Fat?

**Become Slim This Summer**

Have you heard about the new system for weight reduction?

You may eat and drink all you need. There is no tedious exercising. Take a little oil of korein at mealtimes and when retiring; also follow the simple, clear directions. A loss of weight, ten to sixty pounds (whatever you need to lose), may be expected by this safe and pleasant system of fat reduction. At the druggist's get a small box of oil of korein capsules, and start at once. Be of normal size, with good figure and attractive appearance, agile, quick-witted, healthier and more efficient. By reducing weight now you are likely to avoid one or more diseases, heart weakness, sunstroke, apoplexy, etc., and to add years to your life.

**ALL THESE FREE**

**Secret Locket and Neck Chain Pendant and Neck Chain, imitation Wrist Watch with adjustable leather strap and buckle and these Four lovely Rings. ALL Given FREE to anyone for selling only 12 of our Jewelry Novelties at 10c each. Write to-day. Fresh from factory. Be in fashion. Address: E. T. Dale Mfg. Co. Providence, R. I.**

# ARE WEAK NERVES AND LACK OF PHYSICAL STRENGTH HOLDING YOU BACK IN LIFE?

## You Must Have Plenty of Iron in Your Blood if You Want the Power and Energy to Win, Says Physician

**When the crushing grip of worry, trials and care saps your vitality and keeps you from the full enjoyment of home, social and business life—take Nuxated Iron and watch its strength-giving, up-building effect—it will increase the strength and endurance of weak, nervous run-down folks in two weeks' time in many instances.**

THOUSANDS are held back in life for want of sufficient iron in the blood," says Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital (Out-Door Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital, in commenting on the relation of strong nerves and physical endurance to the attainment of success and power.

"A weak body means a weakened brain; weak nerve force means weakened will power, and like the race horse beaten by a nose, many a capable man or woman falls just short of winning because they don't back up their mentality with the physical strength and energy which come from having plenty of iron in the blood. That irritable twitch, that fit of despondency, that dizzy, fearful feeling—these are the sort of signals nature gives to tired, listless folks when the blood is clamoring for strength-giving iron—more iron to restore the health by enriching the blood and creating thousands of new red blood cells.

"In my opinion the greatest curse to the health and strength of American people of today is the alarming deficiency of iron in their blood. Iron is absolutely essential to enable your blood to transform the food you eat into muscular tissue and brain. It is through iron in the red coloring matter of the blood that life-sustaining oxygen enters the body. Without iron there is no strength, vitality and endurance to combat obstacles or withstand severe strains. Lack of sufficient iron in the blood has ruined many a man's nerves and utterly robbed him of that virile force and stamina which are so necessary to success and power in every walk of life.

"Therefore, I strongly advise those who feel the need of a strength and blood builder to get a physician's prescription for organic iron—Nuxated Iron—or if you don't want to go to this trouble, then purchase only Nuxated Iron in its original packages and see that this particular name (Nuxated Iron) appears on the package. If you have taken other iron products and failed to get results, remember that such preparations are an entirely different thing from Nuxated Iron, which has been used and strongly endorsed by many physicians formerly connected with well-known Hospitals, the Hon. Leslie M. Shaw, former Presidential Cabinet Officer, former United States Senators, Vice-Presidential Nominee Charles A. Towne, former members of Congress, distinguished United States Army Generals (retired), Judge Atkinson of the United States Court of Claims, at Washington, and others."

In regard to the value of Nuxated Iron, Former Health Commissioner of Chicago, William R. Kerr, said: "As Health Commissioner of the City of Chicago, I was importuned many times to recommend different medicines, mineral waters, etc. Never yet have I gone on record as favoring any particular remedy. But, in the case of Nuxated Iron, I feel an exception should be made to the rule. From my own experience with it, I feel that it is such a valuable remedy that it ought to be used in every hospital and prescribed by every physician in this country, and if my endorsement shall induce anaemic, nervous, run-down men and women to take Nuxated Iron, and receive the wonderful tonic benefits which I have received, I shall feel greatly gratified that I made an exception to my life-long rule in recommending it."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, formerly Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

No matter what other tonics or iron remedies you have used without success—if you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired; next take two five-grain tablets of Nuxated Iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. Nuxated Iron will increase the strength, power and endurance of delicate, nervous, run-down people in two weeks' time in many instances.

MANUFACTURERS' NOTE: Nuxated Iron which has been used by so many successful people with such surprising results, and which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians is not a secret remedy, but one which is well-known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

## BE SURE TO READ

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